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CONTENTS

	Page
COMMENTS	29
MAN-POWER AND MORALE	31
BOOKS, MUSIC, FILMS—AND WHO CARES? By J. B. Priestley	32
CHINA—BOUND AND FREE. By Gilbert Baker	33
A LONDON DIARY	34
THIS ENGLAND	36
SHOULD LEADERS LEAD? By Tom Harrisson	36
HE DIGGED A PIT. By Sagittarius	37
SOUP AND MORALS. By Y. Y.	37
"LES PAUVRES GARS . . ." By David Scott	38
CHU CHIN CHARING CROSS ROAD. By William Plomer	38
THE COMMUNISTS IN FRANCE. By Victor Gollancz	39
PLAYS AND PICTURES	40
THE MOVIES. By William Whitebait	40
CORRESPONDENCE	40
From Peter Evans; Arthur Salaman; Lionel Mundy; Rebecca West; R. Polendine; Raymond Postgate; An Ordinary Fellow.	
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By V. S. Pritchett	42
REVIEWS:	
"La Voix Humaine." By Edward Sackville-West	44
On the Brink. By George Orwell	46
Unity in Diversity. By E. E. Kellett	46
New Novels. By Anthony West	46
Pot Lore. By W. W. Winkworth	47
SHORTER NOTICES	47
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS	48
THE WEEK IN THE CITY. By Cynicus	50

HITLER PROPOSES

BEFORE another week is out Hitler will probably have announced his plans for a conquered Continent. Already we can see the shape of the Monopoly Feudalism he proposes. In a *Reich* more ambitious than that envisaged by any Holy Roman Emperor, the Führer seeks to combine the functions both of the Holy Father and of the temporal power. Destroying the structure of democracy, of private capitalism and of the nation, the Nazis propose a new continental bureaucracy upheld in its non-German territories by satellite *Gauleiters* and functionaries. Hitler has not fulfilled the dreams of Bismarck: he has destroyed the structure upon which Bismarck built his dream. Nor has he realised the vision of Napoleon, who conceived of a Europe politically united but economically open to the free activities of a rising *bourgeoisie*. Mahomet, conqueror and prophet, is a closer parallel.

To stop the Nazi drive we have to realise that this war is itself a revolution. The mere battles of armies and navies and air squadrons are relatively insignificant. Hitler has not merely defeated the forces of one nation State with the forces of another nation State, he is attempting to use the Nazi war machine to wipe out the nations of Europe. He has used the same tactics in international affairs which brought him success at home. There, instead of launching a frontal attack upon the old order, he recognised its corruption and climbed to power upon its shoulders. That was the measure of his contempt for German conservatism. He did not need to destroy it: he hired its representatives as diplomatists or bureaucrats and left its capitalists as sleeping partners, wealthy enough to forget their impotence. He has done the same thing in foreign countries. Pierre Laval played a part before the downfall of his country not dissimilar to that of Herr von Papen and he may receive the same rewards when the new order is established in France. Hindenburg in Germany, Sirovy in Czechoslovakia, Pétain in France—the senile upholders of an effete military tradition—have been exploited by Hitler for his Nordic purposes. In the new European order, submissive capitalists, timid civil servants and a respectable *bourgeoisie* become the tools of the Nazi war lords. For a time they are to preserve their positions and their pensions while the masses in the towns and in the factories are driven down to the state of serfdom from which they were emancipated generations ago. The Age of Reason vanishes: the age of Monopoly-Feudalism dawns.

The new European order of Hitler's dreams would be a four-class State. At the top of the pyramid stand the Nazi warlords with their princely palaces, their uniforms and their retinues and the gigantic bureaucracy of the Third Reich in every capital of Europe. Next come the masses of the German people, a "petit-plutocracy" specially privileged, in return for long hours of work, to receive a racial crumb from the warlords' table; then the rest of the European peoples, sweating for their task-masters without rights or privileges, and lastly the colonial people who upon Hitler's reckoning are to be regarded not as human beings but as human tools. But this continental Empire is also to be a monopoly for German industry. The Germans, as befits the ruling race, are to control that industrial wealth which is the basis of modern military power. The lesser breeds, the Czechs, the Poles, the French, and no doubt the Italians, are to remain in or to revert to the status of peasant peoples, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the princes of Europe. By forcing wide areas of Europe back to this primitive economic level, the Nazis hope to crush all dangerous and progressive elements. The human spirit shall slumber once again as it slumbered in the Dark Ages, and he who dares to waken it will be tapped on the shoulder by a Gestapo agent.

This is the shape of the Europe which this island will confront in warfare this winter, a Europe—and this should be frankly faced—fundamentally hostile to Britain. The Nazis in Germany and their *Gauleiters* and functionaries in the occupied territories will regard us as the only obstacle to the fulfilment of their dreams; the masses, subjected to a new bondage and plundered of their food by the German armies, are to be induced to transfer their resentment to that Britain which stands in the way of a Nazi peace.

But that is not the worst. The *Dritte Reich*, like its German predecessors, is not limited by geographical frontiers: on the contrary, it is founded on a dream of world domination and it is driven

to the realisation of that dream by urgent economic and psychological motives. The new Nazi ruling class is composed of men to whom peace and prosperity, such as the vast majority of mankind desire, would be a tedious vacuum; and it has nurtured a generation of German youth in the same philosophy of war. But it has gone farther. It has created a war economy which could not easily be diverted to peaceful aims even if the men behind it wished to do so. The four-class State is founded upon an eternal class war and maintained only by the terror of the Gestapo; a long period of peace would shake it to its very foundations. For this reason we may assume that the resources of the new European order will be immediately mobilised for further war, to the East towards the wealth of the Ukraine, to the South over the continent of Africa, to the West against Britain and the Americas. Has Hitler any other choice except that between further conquests and corroding struggles with oppressed peoples?

It is this dilemma which gives us our chance of survival. Britain, as Mr. Attlee has said, may be "the fortress of freedom," and can avoid defeat if we make European revolution the basis of our strategy. In the last war revolutions both in Russia and Germany were the resultant of military defeat: in this war military victory has been achieved by Hitler partly at least as a resultant of social disintegration. And this weapon can be turned against him. For this purpose no political programme or rehash of peace aims are of any avail. Our peace aims must grow out of the organ of revolution which we create here and abroad. For in creating a revolutionary organisation sufficient to overthrow the Nazi ruling class, we shall have begun to build the structure of the new order which will succeed the Nazis.

The French Tragedy

Constitutional events in France proceed according to the usual Fascist plan. The Third Republic had not been in good health for years; but now they have killed it. If all those who have long conspired against French democracy required conditions for carrying out their designs, the defeat and demoralisation of France have provided them with these conditions. That the French parliamentary system was unwieldy and inefficient and even in some ways corrupt no one will deny. There was plenty of room for improvement. But the Pétain Government are not improving the mechanism of the Third Republic; they are scrapping it altogether. They are scrapping not merely the existing parliamentary institutions; they are suppressing what freedom still existed in France; and are abolishing the whole heritage of the French tradition of liberty. They are turning France into a police state, which will be far more ruthless than anything known during the worst moments of the Second Empire.

In Germany, as to a lesser degree in Italy, the authoritarian régime came into being in an atmosphere of enthusiasm—an enthusiasm felt by at least a large part of the younger generation. No enthusiasm, no hope, no inspiration can be derived by anyone from the sight of the 85-year-old Marshal Pétain's efforts to "rejuvenate" France. In what he and his men are doing there is no rejuvenating quality; the monkey-gland treatment they are administering to their unhappy country can, at most, give it the faint illusion that it is vaguely alive and, to use Leopold's phrase, "relatively independent." Before many months are past, the French people, who do not yet know the whole Armistice terms and have no inkling of the peace that Hitler intends, will have lost even this illusion.

By aping the Nazis, by aping the Italian Fascists, by reserving all their anger and abuse for England, Pétain and his Ministers are hoping to ingratiate themselves with Hitler and Mussolini so that these may allow France to enjoy the illusion of independence. But if Germany is compelled, by England's successful resistance, to draw more and more ruthlessly on France's economic and labour resources, all that Pétain and his Ministers are now hoping to save will be lost. They themselves will be left powerless vassals of the Nazis. The whole spectacle is so uninspiring, so unstimulating to the people of France that a mental, if not a physical reaction (for physical reactions are well kept under control by the Gestapo) is bound to occur before long. That probable reaction is the only hopeful aspect of the present French situation. The traditions of individual liberty and of national self-respect are still powerful among the French people; and particularly among the French working class. The Pétain régime is something that can appeal only to the old and the timid, not to the young and the bold.

In the meantime, however, France is going to suffer all the beastliness of the totalitarian state, without any of its advantages. There will be no parliament worthy of the name, except a rubber-stamp Chamber probably elected on the principle of the "family" vote, so dear to the heart of Colonel de La Rocque, with some "corporative" eyewash thrown in. All freedom of press and speech will be rigorously suppressed; the Daladier censorship will seem a liberal institution in comparison. The men of *Gringoire*—whose leader, Chiappe, is now the virtual *Gauleiter* of Paris—will hound their helpless victims on a much vaster scale than hitherto; Fascist deputies like M. Tixier-Vignancourt have already demanded that action be taken against "everybody responsible for the war"; orders have already been issued for the arrest of four prominent pro-British journalists. "*Les réactionnaires*," Anatole France said, "*sont des méchants gens.*" The Pétain Government, like the Second Empire before it, are hoping to gain their chief support from the inert, pacifist, money-loving peasantry. The flattery of the peasantry was started eighteen months ago by Daladier, who never failed to treat them as the backbone of France, as "Class I Citizens." Most of the urban proletariat is now in parts of France under German occupation; and M. Laval will no doubt be glad to see them well looked after by the Gestapo. As for M. Pomaret, he gave himself pretty well away when he said that France would cease to be a highly industrialised country. This would suit both the Pétain Government and the Nazis perfectly. The former would not be unduly bothered by a turbulent, or potentially turbulent working class, and the latter would be glad to see France develop into their granary and larder, and into a valuable market for their industrial goods. But Hitler is not an "economic man": it will be surprising if he is long satisfied with any "business arrangement."

The Arandora Star

The sinking of the *Arandora Star* has disclosed some highly disturbing facts. Mr. Cross, the Minister of Shipping, in answer to a question on Tuesday, assured the House of Commons on the authority of the Secretary of State for War that all the Germans on board were Nazi sympathisers and that none came to this country as refugees. Despite this official assurance we have the evidence of the list of casualties to prove that among the passengers were not only German prisoners of war and Italian aliens, but also some well-known anti-Nazi fighters. Valentin Wittke, a sturdy trade unionist with a long record of underground activity in Germany, was saved, but Louis Weber, one of the most active anti-Fascists in the German Seamen's Union, and a well-known German Communist M.P. were drowned. The obvious discrepancy between these damaging facts and the Minister of Shipping's statement is explained by his subsequent remark that none of the passengers "had category B or C certificates." Mr. Cross assumes that all those Germans who were interned with A certificates were Nazi sympathisers. Unfortunately this was not the case. Owing to the lamentable work of certain tribunals passionate anti-Nazis were interned in some cases simply because of that underground activity which should have been their best testimonial, while C certificates were given to others with a very dubious reputation for whom irresponsible, but influential people had acted as sponsors. Despite frequent requests, the War Office has refused to provide lists of the casualties on the *Arandora Star* to the refugee organisations in London. Meanwhile, indiscriminate shipping of internees to Canada proceeds apace. Numerous refugee families have this week received letters of farewell from the internment camps. In some instances, these were from men and women who up to a fortnight ago were actively co-operating in Government departments in highly important war work. Unless this madness can be stopped, it seems probable that when the Government does grapple with the problem of European revolution, it will find that it has shipped abroad many men and women whose services it desperately needs.

The Treatment of Refugees

The House of Commons debate on Wednesday showed that Members are now alive to the tragic errors that have been made in our treatment of refugees. Members were properly moved by reports of suicides and the confusion of Nazis and refugees in the internment camps.

We could give a long list of absurd arrests. Hans Gottfurcht and Mr. Cernitz, the representative of the Austrian Socialist Party, are still in prison, and, almost incredible to say, Professor Burchardt, of the Oxford Economics Research Institute, is now also interned. In many camps the internees are not permitted to receive newspapers or even to listen to the British wireless bulletins. Though the Ministry of Supply has managed to ensure that Germans working in the arms industry shall be left in freedom, men and women vitally necessary to the war effort in many other departments are being rounded up every day by the police and treated as though they were spies. We would make two simple suggestions on this matter. First, non-political and anti-Nazi refugees who are interned should be allowed to hear news and to do useful work in the camps. In the second place the conception of "useful aliens" referred to by Sir John Anderson last week should be extended. The Home Office in conjunction with the War Office should institute a new category of refugees useful to the war effort whether in commerce or in propaganda or in other departments. Direction should be given that such refugees should not be interned unless there is explicit evidence against them and also that those who have been interned should at once be released. If this policy is to be carried out, it will be necessary for the Home Office and the War Office to take the advice of persons intimately acquainted with the problems of Germany. The present Aliens Department and the War Office Committee are not adequately equipped for this task.

Nazi Propaganda

The New British Broadcasting Station has been operating since early this year, at first on one short wavelength, now on three. It shows an advance in the technique of Nazi propaganda. The material is almost entirely news, which they call their Uncensored News Service, but actually it is not quite news. Each day it selects what seems the good news of the day for Britain, and gives another version of it which is universally depressing and unfavourable to Britain. The very British voice is supposed to make us feel that the Fascist is in our midst, and the occasional bangs on a gong are designed further to depress the listener. The station goes much farther than that of Haw Haw. Its whole technique and method is to pretend that it is operating inside Britain. Foolish people are asked to believe that this is the "British Freedom Station." Close students of the station have not been able to detect a single slip which would have given away their alien position to the listener. Always it talks of "we" and "us." The purpose of the station would seem to be to drive a wedge between the leaders and the people, to weaken the prestige of leadership. Thus Mr. Chamberlain is no longer attacked, but every difficulty is attributed to Mr. Churchill. At first a working-class point of view was stressed; now the station is more conservative. One of their most ingenious ideas has been to invent an "Institute of British Opinion," to whose "surveys of morale" they have given much publicity. On Tuesday night they went one further, and gave verbatim interviews of the Mass-Observation type, said to have been recorded by a housewife in Southend, a stockbroker, etc. Throughout, the approach is that of an informed appeal directly to the public, as if from one in the know about everything. One of the best Nazi ideas has been to broadcast detailed instructions about behaviour in the case of invasion. Exactly the wrong instructions are given. At all costs you must get out on to the roads! And the great thing is to make for North Wales. That is the only safe place! A new technique of international propaganda is here suggested. Should the B.B.C. broadcast detailed instructions to the German people telling them that they must come out and look straight up into the air in an air raid?

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MAN-POWER AND MORALE

THE war has now clearly reached a stage at which nothing less is needed than a complete mobilisation of the man-power of the British people. We are face to face with the imperative demand for more tanks, more aeroplanes, more ships, more equipment for every section of the armed forces; and at the same time, in order to maintain our power to purchase materials and armaments from abroad, we need to do all we can to keep our exports up to a high level, without unduly curtailing consumption by civilians at home. This ought to mean an intense scarcity of man-power. It ought to mean jobs for all who are in any way capable of aiding in the national effort. It ought to mean that all who are eager to serve, instead of hawking their services vainly from one agency to another, would be welcomed with open arms, and fitted into the jobs in which they can be used to the greatest national advantage. The basic difference between the economy which we now need and the old economy, which is perforce abandoned, is not even yet appreciated. There is still no central planning; no one has decided how much labour is required to maintain a good and healthy minimum consumption for the community and how much is available for war production and mobilisation.

Instead of this, we find, on the basis of the latest unemployment returns, that workers are being extruded from ordinary peacetime jobs almost as fast as they are being absorbed into the essential industries, despite the gaps caused in the ranks of labour by the calling up of men for the armed forces. We find those responsible for the control of the consumers' industries hesitating to take any action that would restrict consumers' demand, because they fear that the consequence will be, not the use of those displaced from these industries in essential national work, but unemployment on an increasing scale. For instance, it is absurd that there should be no decrease in the number of workers in the distributing trades. We find the war industries clamouring for more skilled workers, of types that are really scarce, but protesting their inability to take on more less skilled or female labour until they have been supplied with these non-existent skilled craftsmen. We find training—of semi-skilled workers into skilled, of skilled workers into instructors, and of unskilled workers into machine-minders—proceeding very slowly; many big works are still unequipped with training departments, and the training resources of the Technical Colleges and other competent agencies are still inadequately used, or uneconomically used for types of small-scale production which could well be combined with their use for training. Finally, we find a host of persons of all classes, ages and capacities growing steadily more exasperated at the refusal of their offers of service.

This is a fantastic situation—and the more difficult to tackle because it cannot be explained by the deficiencies of any particular Minister or responsible official, but rather by the routine habits and departmentalism of official circles, the inability on the part of some important Civil Servants and some Ministers to rise to the occasion and change their habits in face of the demands of war. Worst of all, the machinery of state is cluttered up with so many odd and unrationalised jobs that there is no one with enough power or drive or vision to achieve any real co-ordination of effort.

Week after week, the need for a general economic plan, and for some one authoritative body in charge of its execution, emerges more plainly. But we are offered instead co-ordinating machinery which does not in fact co-ordinate the overlapping sectional efforts of the various departments and "controls" because there is nobody whose word goes. There is nobody who has his finger on all the different things that are being done, or is able to review and organise the national effort as a whole.

This failure is primarily one of production—for it means that the current output of industry is much smaller than it could be if all the available resources were being properly used—but it is hardly less a failure in the matter of morale. Every worker not used for essential production means to-day not merely a deficiency in the output of necessary goods, but also a potential victim of war neurosis. Those who can feel confident that they are being used and that their work is a real contribution to the war effort are least of all likely to fall into a defeatist habit of mind. They are happy in being useful, and this happiness gives them confidence and inward serenity of mind.

As against this, every person who is conscious of uselessness is to-day a national danger. Every unused worker, whether used to regular employment or not, is a potential defeatist. This applies to old, middle-aged, and young alike—to the old, who are told that they are not wanted because they are old, to the middle-aged, who are left languishing in jobs that are dying under them, and to the

young who are left to kick their heels in idleness because they are too young.

The task of the nation is to secure maximum output. There is no longer any reason at all for leaving men or women idle merely because their labour is unlikely to yield a commercial profit.

This, however, is precisely what those at the head of the various sections of the war economic machine are apparently still unable to realise. We can see no signs of any plan whereby the many thousands of workers who are being thrown out of employment in luxury trades and non-essential trades and services generally are to be absorbed in useful production as fast as they can be dispensed with in their normal occupations. We can see no signs that anyone is seriously thinking about the best ways of using promptly the services of adolescents poised between school-leaving and being called up for military service. We can see no plan for thorough dilution of the available supply of skilled labour, so as to release enough skilled instructors to train at top speed women workers for employment in the more routine tasks of producing essential war supplies. These defects cannot be remedied by private firms, trading at their own risk. There should be a complete pooling of industrial resources.

It may be suggested that this failure to use the available man-power —again demonstrated by the latest unemployment returns issued this week—is due to shortage either of raw materials or of machine-tools on which the new workers are to be employed. But is it really due to either of these causes? Whenever we make inquiries about particular materials requisite for munition-making, we are told confidently that there is no actual shortage, whatever may be the long-run prospects of deficiency. As for tools and implements, we shall believe in a real shortage only when we are told authoritatively that the plant available is being regularly worked on a three- or at least a two-shift system (wherever there are no insuperable difficulties in the way) and when all the tools of unnecessary factories have been shifted to essential works.

No doubt some works are already using their plant to the full —sometimes by overstraining the resistance of their existing employees rather than by taking on more workers and spreading their skilled craftsmen to better advantage over a larger number of "dilutees." But we get from all over the country reports of small firms which are unable to use their plants and are in danger of closing down without any prospect of having their power to serve as efficient sub-contractors for small parts adequately considered. Government contracts are still not planned on the basis of the absolute limitations of certain factors of production, such as shipping space, but rather on the basis of unnecessary bottlenecks that are still permitted to arise when private activity conflicts with urgent needs. Often this is justified on the reasonable ground that to absorb some group of workers for essential war work would have the effect of causing unemployment. The building trade offers an obvious example. One of the main causes of the lag in the expansion of arms production is that there is a shortage of bricklayers, justified on the ground that to transfer them from non-essential building would throw masons out of work.

In effect, it seems plain, that despite the speed-up of the past few weeks (which has undoubtedly achieved *some* improvement), this country is still far from organising its maximum economic effort. As long as the ball can be thrown from one department to another—Department A maintaining that it can discover no large unsatisfied demand for labour, and B that it cannot expand production because the right kinds of skilled labour are not to be had for the asking—it will be totally impossible either to bring about a real mobilisation of the national man-power, or to prevent a widespread sense of uselessness from sapping civilian morale. Give us, in place of so many unco-ordinated and too often warring economic departments a single planning agency with authority over the entire economic field. Then we can begin to get things straight. Till that is done, common sense will remain powerless in face of departmental routine, and business men will continue to calculate in terms of profits instead of national needs. Employers will still grab skilled labour from one another, without regard to the consequences to anyone except themselves; and the enthusiastic citizen who presents himself at one door after another in the hope of admission to the national service will still be sent empty away. Young and old together, there are hundreds of thousands eating their hearts out in useless jobs, or in no jobs at all. Will no one rid us of these honest, often able, but nevertheless pestilent routineers who are, with slothful conscientiousness and worship of dead tradition, stifling the will to service which is in the heart of the people?

BOOKS, MUSIC, FILMS—AND WHO CARES?

OUR war effort may be speeding up, but the way in which the Government handles the people is still as unimaginative as ever. I will repeat once more what I think the people of this country need. First, more direct leadership, more bold commands and less fussing and nagging. Secondly, once those commands have been issued and obeyed, more colour, fun, romance, beauty, high jinks of every sort, and a great deal less of this gentlemanly, mumbling, half-witted, official dreariness, that atmosphere in which niggling, uncreative little minds have their existence.

Nothing is being done to put an end to this dreariness, and a great deal is being done to blot out any last remaining bits of colour. I am at this moment up to the neck in protests against this blotting out. For example, this Purchase Tax as applied to books. At a time when public morale is all-important it is proposed to put a tax on it. It would pay the Government to spend ten million pounds on books these next few months to give them away and encourage their production. But for the chance of a pitiful little extra revenue, which will promptly be cancelled out by losses elsewhere, it is proposed to cripple the book trade, drive half the publishers in the country into bankruptcy, cut down a sound export trade, deprive ourselves of valuable propaganda at home and abroad, either increase the cost of education or reduce its effectiveness, fine the public for indulging in a most valuable form of recreation, and strike a terrible blow at the whole intellectual and cultural life of the country. I doubt if a more thoroughly mischievous tax has ever been seriously considered. The damage it can do is so wildly out of all proportion to the miserable revenue it can bring that you almost feel it must be the creation of some evil genius and not the result of the usual stupidity.

All this will seem perfervid unless it is realised that the book trade cannot be lumped with other trades. A war brings it vastly increased costs and a dwindling market and no fat Government contracts to make up the difference. The business of book publishing is tottering already, and an extra burden of 10 or 15 per cent. will murder it. Moreover, the worst sufferers will not be the publishers of rubbishy stuff but the very houses that produce books of great distinction. And the consumers who will feel the pinch of this tax most bitterly will not be persons with more money than sense but students and intellectuals of modest means, many of whom, of course, are serving with the Forces.

So far I have said nothing about authors. But the tax will hit them hardest of all, and most of them are in no condition now to take such punishment. Most of us imagined a year ago, in our innocence, that if there should be a war, then it must be a war in which public *morale* would be of immense importance, and that therefore much use would be made of the services of authors, who understand something of the public mind and know how to use the various arts of persuasion. We know better now. We have been made to realise that for purposes of propaganda one civil servant, after years of being buried alive in the Circumlocution Office, is worth a score of mere scribblers. Every day I receive letters from distinguished colleagues telling me they have been knocking on Government doors for months in vain, imploring me to find them something to do, quite forgetting, in their desperation, that I too am only an author, hold no position of authority, and merely happen to have bustled into one or two jobs lately because I can assume a fierce manner and frighten superior persons with my hard West Riding accent. I can do nothing for my colleagues beyond protesting against this unending stupidity, though it is true that one or two of us hope to form a small committee that will press and enlarge upon the claims of our profession.

The author, then, is in a sad plight. If he asks for some form of national service suitable to his peculiar abilities, he is told to go away and write another of his jolly tales. This is bad enough. But now he is also told that he will be very fortunate if he finds a publisher for his jolly tales, because of this Purchase Tax. With half the publishers going out of business, authors who cannot command a very large public will not be able to get into print at all, and new authors, whose report upon this rapidly changing world is of the utmost value, will not have a hope this side of heaven.

What the official mind seems always to forget is that you cannot interfere with a natural growth and expect to find the organism still alive afterwards. The intellectual life of our community is bound up with the regular production of books. If one suffers, so will the other. It is possible to do more damage in three months to book

production than can be repaired in three years. Just at the time when we need a free and generous exchange of new ideas and knowledge, we may discover that such an exchange is no longer at our command just because, in order to fetch in a doubtful extra bit of revenue, the best medium has been wrecked. No worse moment could have been chosen for the taxation of books. There is, I repeat, a touch of genius in such stupidity.

It takes years of hard work to build up a great orchestra. The finest orchestra in this country, one of the very best in the whole world, is the London Philharmonic Orchestra. During years when this country was muddling nearly everything, the fine flower of L.P.O. playing was being achieved, and now we ought to point to it with pride just as we ought to listen to it with pleasure. This great orchestra, now a self-governing body, is desperately appealing for funds, not to keep itself in luxurious idleness during the remaining weeks of summer, but to keep itself in existence at all.

The members of the L.P.O. have made severe sacrifices, refusing far more remunerative engagements elsewhere, simply because they are proud of their orchestra. They ask for nothing but a reasonable livelihood and the opportunity to keep on playing with the L.P.O. They have been giving week-end concerts in picture theatres all over the place. They are ready to go anywhere if there is a stage to play on and an audience waiting to be enchanted. And this great orchestra, which must be considered one of the finest corporate achievements of our civilisation, is almost begging for shillings, so desperate is its plight, so anxious are its members to keep together. For once it is disbanded, the soul of it may never be recaptured. It would take years to weld together into one glorious instrument another seventy players.

Not a penny of public money comes their way. (They are lucky they are not taxed.) The price of one of the minor machines of war would save this orchestra for another twelve months. As it is, it does not know how to stagger on until autumn comes. But I trust that readers will join me in my determination that the London Philharmonic Orchestra shall be saved, and I ask such readers to look out for the various appeals or to send a donation to me. Let us fight like blazes against the Nazis, but let us also fight like blazes to keep intact here all the things worthy of a fight.

Another melancholy example is the G.P.O. Film Unit, with which I have been doing some work lately. This Unit is, and long has been, in my opinion, the best of our documentary film groups, just as it was the father of them all. Here again, keen young men have refused good offers from commercial studios and worked for tiny salaries because they were glad and proud to be working for the G.P.O. Film Unit, whose producers and directors have had a fine knack of discovering and training excellent young technicians. If this Unit disintegrates, a valuable organisation will disappear, and it may be years and years before it is possible to replace it. Yet it is in acute danger of disintegration. It is being attacked both from without and within, and its key men are being called up, though when these men begged to be allowed to do their own work, filming, on the Western Front, they were refused permission to go out there. And I say this Unit should be preserved, to continue the grand work that it has been doing now for years.

So there you are, one melancholy example after another. Some people think there is malice in all this, a deliberate attack upon art and intelligence. But I do not think so. It is only plain stupidity, part of this dreariness that is produced by a certain type of official mind in contact with war conditions, just as London fog is produced by Thames mists in contact with the smoke of the city. Can we do anything about it? Yes, all day and half the night we can raise our voices, jeer and flout and roar, make a nuisance of ourselves, until it is officially recognised that the mind and soul of man exist elsewhere than in one of their awful perorations, to which this is beginning to bear so marked a resemblance that I will now end my protest.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

CHINA—BOUND AND FREE

[This article, written by a correspondent who has spent six months in China, gives a useful indication of conditions there after exactly three years of war.]

THERE are still some people in England who say they suppose it does not matter very much to the average Chinese what form of government he lives under. I am not Chinese, but out of the last eighteen months I have spent six months in occupied and six in free China, and a comparison of conditions may be of some value in making an answer with which I know most Chinese would concur.

I was in Canton when the Japanese entered in October, 1938. It was a day of bitter memories for all of us who had known and loved the city. The police had warned all the inhabitants to get out. There was a tremendous exodus within a few hours before the first Japanese tanks entered the city, firing on all sides as they came. Fortunately by that time most of the city was deserted. For twenty-four hours after the Chinese Government withdrew there was absolutely no control of any kind in Canton, and as the fires began which announced the "scorched earth" policy, little parties of peasants from nearby, and the hardier souls who had stayed in the city ventured forth to do what looting they could. Then the Japanese soldiers came in and did their share; only that was called "requisitioning," but the result for the average Chinese was the same. If he had gone out to the country to stay with his relatives he would find when he returned that his home had been either looted, burnt, or occupied by the soldiers.

At first the Japanese were much more concerned to keep themselves safe than to start creating a new order in East Asia by protecting other people. The villages round Canton simply reverted to a primitive social order, with the elders of each village organising its own defence against all comers. In the city itself there was a great deal of banditry. It was a pity all the people who had arms in Canton could not have been organised in common resistance to the invader. Before long there were indeed guerilla units harassing the Japanese in the neighbourhood, and we could hear distant gunfire. It was not easy to draw the line between the sporadic and the organised fight for existence.

In Canton itself the earliest contribution to social amenities made by the Japanese was the revival of gambling and opium, both of which had been banned (on the whole not ineffectively) by the Chinese Government some years before. For themselves, and for the few civilians who trickled over from Formosa in the rather forlorn hope of making a pile, they preferred beershops which soon sprang up like mushrooms. And what of the Japanese themselves and their relations with the average Chinese? It is only fair to take them at their best or at their average, for at their worst I believe they were too much like their compatriots at Nanking, in their relations with women, but not on such a wide scale (if numbers are important in these matters).

I once had a meal with Japanese officials. They had invited some foreign pressmen to a Japanese meal held in an old Chinese house which had been converted into a kind of officers' restaurant. We sat on the floor and were waited on obsequiously by Japanese girls. It was all very jocular in a loud army way; the Colonel from the Army Information Bureau played up to the girls and asked us why it was the Chinese girls did not come back from Hong Kong or the country. . . . We knew the answer to that one. Then we talked about the position of women, and it was quite clear that they did not approve of women having so much freedom as they do in Europe and America. They come second in Japan, and for all their lovely dresses and fan-play, they are evidently not meant to be more than attractive playthings for the army and other men. The Colonel waxed talkative and was rather revealing.

"When I was a subaltern," he said, "soon after the world war, there was a lot of democratic feeling in my country, and we were taught to believe in President Wilson's doctrines—but we have got rid of all those ideas now."

"You are not a democrat, then," I said, hoping to draw him.

"Well," he replied. "I don't know that I care much for the principles of democracy or imperialism. All I know is that I like fighting." . . .

I did not know the answer to that one.

The Japanese soldier, polite, technically well-educated, patronising, slow and painstaking, entirely untrustworthy and ruthless if he thinks his Emperor (or his pocket and prestige) will benefit, would like to "co-operate" with the "New China." I saw what he meant by this when I attended the inauguration of the Canton puppet Government in December, 1938, in the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall, which only a few months before his aeroplanes had deliberately bombed. It was now decorated with the Japanese flag and the old "five barred" flag of China carefully draped to hide Dr. Sun's portrait and Will in which he declares his forty-year ideal of China as an independent modern State. The hall was full of Chinese of the rougher sort, probably subsidised to come; we watched them being searched by the Japanese soldiers as they came in. The Japanese Army Commander spoke first in Japanese, which was interpreted by a Japanese into the Cantonese dialect. Behind him on one side were the Army and Navy officers, looking remarkably prosperous and "Blimpish." On the other side were the puppets who got up and bowed humbly

at the beginning and end of each speech. You could almost see the strings from the top of the stage. Two of the puppets made conventional speeches about the revival of Kwangtung, the one an elderly stockbroker, journalist and hanger-on of the Japanese from Hong Kong, the other an unsuccessful General, re-emerging after last being heard of in Kwangsi politics about 1920. The meeting closed with the reading of congratulatory telegrams from bogus societies in Canton, and the audience hurried out to do a joy-ride round the town in army lorries.

After that we heard nothing of the so-called autonomous government; it made no difference at all to the lot of the average man, and Canton remained a city of the poor under Japanese control. Propaganda, which soon broke out like a rash all over the city, told us clearly what sort of a new order the Japanese hoped for. It was in effect the old pre-revolutionary China. Buddhism and the "Three Religions" (Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism) were invoked as the spiritual basis of the regime. Posters showed the good Japanese soldiers bestowing gifts of modern enlightenment on the poor Chinese peasant. It is true. They are very kind sometimes. They like to pat the children on the head. The Japanese love to wallow in that kind of sentimentality. They are doing their best in the occupied areas of China to put the clock back, and to turn the average Chinese from a shrewd and practical judge of events into a dull-witted opium-sodden moron, capable of no emotion but obedient gratitude to the masters of a new slave State.

One of the most cheering sights for the Chinese to-day is to come across the bridge from Lao-Kay in French Indo-China and see the Chinese flag flying in Yunnan and to know that they are in free China. For it is a free country in a sense which is not true of many countries to-day. There is freedom of communication. From Kunming, the capital of the Province, it is possible to go by bus or by air or on foot to places so far distant as the Burma border and the Great Wall—and, indeed, as has been done, right through the Japanese lines to Peiping. There is the freedom which you do not realise until you miss it—the freedom of shops which are open, of plenty in the villages, of being able to go for a walk without being stopped by a foreign sentry. There was a sense of freedom, too, in seeing, for the first time in six months, people with a purpose—the Chinese students, the young Government officials working on the roads, or on the new railways, people stationed in new factories or airfields, and all the host of camp followers, restaurant proprietors from Shanghai, salesmen, educationists and social workers who have come with the tremendous migration from the coast towns.

There is considerable freedom of speech and writing, too. The bookshops are full of little books and pamphlets about the war, and especially about the guerrillas of the Eighth Route Army, as the Chinese Communists are now called. The policy of the "United Front," by which the Kuomintang and the Communists agreed to sink their differences in the common resistance to Japan, has meant a great increase in freedom of thought and speech within the last three years. It would not be true to say that these differences are buried for ever, and there is still room for greater unity of purpose between the two parties and between some of the Provincial Governments and the Central Government. But for the average man the main purpose of the Government is quite clear; it is to resist aggression to the end. For even in far Yunnan he has had a taste of the alternative. There have been enough air raids for everyone to know who the Japanese are and why they come, and the average Chinese has still not accepted the subtlety of the doctrine of being bombed into brotherhood.

It is free China, too, because it is doing something more than fighting. A whole new society is being built up in the interior. With their long view of history, the Chinese do not look on the war as the be-all and end-all of their national life. It is for them part of the great Revolution which has been going on since 1911; at the side of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's portrait in any public hall may be seen the words: "The Revolution is not yet completed." People in the interior are just now not so much concerned about the issue of the war. That is taken for granted; the Japanese will be turned out in the not so far distant future (Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek has even spoken of returning to Nanking within two years), but the real question is what will be the future organisation of China after that?

In building her industries afresh, China has the opportunities of avoiding the coal age, and the mistakes of the West. I went round a cotton factory near Kunming, whose manager is a very able Chinese engineer with American experience; it is a Government concern, run by electricity generated from water power on the lake some miles away. It is extremely clean and efficient; there are six thousand looms, spinning day and night. The girls work in three eight-hour shifts; they live in a special hostel in which certain educational and social facilities are provided. Wages are low by our standards and the girls are younger than we should allow in factories in England, but they are considerably better cared for than most of their contemporaries—certainly their contemporaries in Canton.

But the new industries of free China will probably not develop on large-scale lines, and it is likely that the co-operative movement will play an even more important part in the growth of small industry than it has already. The Chinese Industrial Co-operatives plan to established 10,000 co-operatives in Free China by the middle of this summer out of a goal of 30,000. They are combining the effort to revive small industry with the real application of democracy to daily work. All kinds of things, from needles to small arms, are now being produced on a co-operative basis. A report from West Yunnan describes some of them at Hsiakwan on the Burma Highway, and at Tali on the branch road running up to Tibet:

> In the main shopping street of Hsiakwan you can buy one of seven different kinds of hat at a co-operative shop which is plainly marked with one of the gay blue and white signs which can now be found in all parts of China. On the main motor road to Tali is an arrow on a fort pointing to the co-operative cotton mill on the lakeshore. In Tali itself the trunk co-operative has opened a conspicuous bright blue shop in the main street.

The writer (who is a friend of mine) goes on to remark on the contrast between a co-operative which has been going for a few months and one which has just been opened:

> The older co-operatives are spick and span outside as well as in. The workmen quite obviously have a pride in what they are doing and are quick to show you around the premises and offer you a sample of their product. The newer ones, on the other hand, do not at first see the point of the movement, and have to be coached in the use of the freedom to work for themselves and the community and not an employer. But they quickly learn what democracy in industry means, and learn to govern themselves and run their own meetings in a modern way.

It is interesting also to note that the training of the co-operative workers does not only consist of technical subjects but includes courses on Dr. Sun Yat Sen's Three Principles of the People, geography and history of recent years, especially referring to Sino-Japanese relations, "spiritual discipline," and self-management.

The migration of the Chinese Universities to the West requires a story to itself, for it is an heroic one. But that movement, although it does not so much affect the average man now, is one that will most surely preserve for him not only the good earth but the good values of Free China. The students may not feel very comfortable or heroic in those makeshift dormitories in some old temple, where the gods look down in some surprise on the double-decker beds, strewn with text books and pictures of film stars or military heroes. But those boys and girls are keeping something alive and creating something new beyond their classes. You can see this in the plays they act—vigorous stuff about heroes who pretend to be traitors in order to wreck the Japanese puppet Governments and so on; in their songs of the New China in which you can hear something both of the "Marseillaise" and the "Flowers of the Forest"; and in their attention to more classical music. How many of us in such circumstances would be able to muster enough instruments and talent to give several orchestral concerts in aid of war relief? Free China is no ideal State, but for the average man it is a sufficiently practical alternative to submission to the Japanese, and that is why he does not lightly subscribe to the theories of other people that it makes no difference to him.

GILBERT BAKER

A LONDON DIARY

"HE gave us a real hiding. It was almost as bad as if Hitler had invaded us!" That was what my charlady said when she came in on Tuesday morning. I had not heard Lord Woolton's broadcast on Monday night and was surprised to find that she was referring to the new tea ration of two ounces per head. I wonder if the Ministry of Food fully realises the colossal sacrifice which they are asking of the working classes in this country. The working people live on tea: it is the one regular stimulant; they drink it three or four times a day; a cup of tea is the consolation in time of trouble and the ritual of hospitality. My charlady told me that she and her husband and her son used one pound a week. In future they will get six ounces, and I thought she was perfectly fair when she said (without a thought of Marie Antoinette): "Of course, it won't matter to the rich. They can buy coffee." But coffee is expensive, especially if it means boiled milk as well, and to substitute coffee for tea is a dietary revolution.

In this matter of tea I feel sure that the Ministry of Food has been over-drastic from ignorance of working-class habits, and for that reason I think that the National Council of Labour is right in unanimously opposing the Sales Tax which would also fall most heavily on the smaller incomes. Rationing is a difficult problem; no one should oppose its rapid extension, but let no one forget that to ration necessities is always unjust as long as it leaves dozens of lets-out for those with higher incomes. In one case where there was a particularly good case for rationing, the Minister has, I believe, held back because of the effect on the working classes. There is now plenty of perishable food in the country and it would seem sensible to store all tinned food for the winter months when we may be really short. Unfortunately people with small incomes eat little fresh fruit even when it is available and they regard tinned peaches and tinned salmon as staple articles of diet. Probably Lord Woolton is right in relying, for the time being, on publicity to reduce this consumption. But the main problem remains unsolved. Working people have made great sacrifices of trade union rights and, unless it is revised, as I think it must be, they will find the tea ration a severe blow. The upper classes have less to spend than they had before, unless they are willing to use their capital, but they can still have everything they want to eat and drink and they will suffer no hardship from the sensible restriction of courses at restaurants. I am more and more convinced that a capital levy is necessary as a stage to greater unity. If the Conservatives in the House and the industrialists and financiers outside welcome that measure of sacrifice, morale will be greatly strengthened.

* * *

There is a real danger that the propaganda about the speed-up of production will be overdone. The middle-classes can stand any amount of it, but the workers in the shops may react in a very different way if they hear on the air and read in the press nothing but success stories about Lord Beaverbrook and Herbert Morrison. They look at production from a very close range and hundreds of thousands know from personal experience that the new Cabinet has not yet cleaned up the Augean stables. No one blames the Cabinet for that, but many people get intensely irritated by a loose official optimism which seems to show that Whitehall and the Ministry of Information have no idea of the facts. Here is part of a letter which a friend of mine received the other day.

> In the—works a skilled engineer working a machine was refused permission to leave work at 5 p.m. despite the fact that he had not done a job all the afternoon except to clean his machine thoroughly. When he made his second application to finish at 5 p.m. he was told to carry on cleaning his machine during the overtime hours.
>
> In—*I see myself* gangs of aircraft workers cleaning glass partitions inside the works, clearing out shops, being found jobs inside the next store to the one I pass my time in, being found jobs of counting nuts and bolts, throwing stuff on the floor and spending an hour or two putting it back in a different position to what it was in before, etc., etc. I see gangs of men working on the production of motor-cars for the Government waiting for *days* for the next job to come along. I hear men cursing and swearing because, at the present time, when their country is in deadly peril, they are being made to idle half their time away.
>
> I believe these things happen because there is a shortage of material, but are the factories that supply the material working under the same conditions? I hope and trust they are not, but the lesson of France is a terrible lesson that I would give my life to avoid being repeated here.

There is a similar feeling among managers in many businesses. I see that Herbert Morrison had a meeting on Monday with the leading men in the armaments firms at which he asked for suggestions. That is all to the good, but I wish that he and Ernest Bevin could do two other simple things. First, they themselves should go quietly to two or three of the big armaments towns and summon conferences of the managers and of the men's own leaders. There the Ministers should state their case and then give time for a real comeback from the men on the spot. That would do more good than any amount of official area organisation. The second thing I should like Herbert Morrison to do is to ask for suggestions from firms outside the armaments trade. I am sure that one of our troubles is the conviction in Whitehall that armaments can only be produced by armaments firms and that the way to speed up production is to create huge new shadow factories. In the short run, at least, the speed-up could be produced far more effectively by mobilising the plant available in the industries not directly concerned with armaments production, and by seeing that such industries either get sub-contracts for the small operations they can perform or, by co-operating together and pooling their plant and skilled workmen, make themselves into real units of production. Instead of moving the work people out of their present factories into new shadow factories they could as often as not be used on the spot. I do most earnestly suggest that Herbert Morrison should make an appeal to such industries and ask for their suggestions. I fancy he would be astonished at the overwhelming response he received. Some of the biggest firms in the country are already discussing the idea of Capacity Exchanges which, they suggest, should be formed on the model of the Labour Exchange and review the plant available in each particular area and also in each particular type of industry. They are convinced that such Exchanges could be used to mobilise production a great deal more quickly and effectively than any elaborate central survey of capacity.

* * *

A friend who has paid a careful visit of investigation to an area which has been regularly bombed in the last weeks gives me a most interesting account of the effect on the working-class population. Streets which have no gardens for Anderson shelters are developing a community method of overcoming the terror by night. They club together to carpet their street shelter; they take down seats and even beds; they pool their resources to buy comforts for children and women in bad health; they lay aside a special sum for Service men on leave. One of the more ingenious and better-off contrives to fix up an electric light; a partition cuts off a corner where men can leave the party for a time and have a smoke. Communal life like this grows in face of danger and it overcomes fear. Fear comes to the crowd only if it is unprepared; it comes to the lonely and isolated. In this way Anderson are less good than communal shelters, and I was interested to hear of a row of back-gardens where the people in the shelters sang songs in unison so that although the families were physically separate, they might be aware of each other's presence and be spiritually together. What a ghastly comment it is on the human animal that it seems only capable of harmonious co-operation when the whole herd is in desperate danger!

* * *

My attention was called to *Guilty Men* (Gollancz, 2*s.* 6*d.*) by the fact that the wholesale distributors had banned it and that it nevertheless sold 50,000 copies in a few days. As a few wholesalers dominate the trade, it seems reasonable to ask them whether they had any other than a political motive in refusing to distribute this book. A political ban of this kind would be a dangerous portent. The pamphlet itself is introduced with a singularly apt quotation from Mr. Winston Churchill (May 29th, 1936). "The use of recriminating about the past is to enforce effective action at the present." "Cato," the author, is an accomplished pamphleteer. He does not consider how far we are all guilty nor does he attempt any deep analysis of the social forces that have brought us to this pass. His guilty men are Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Samuel Hoare, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Lord Baldwin, Lord Halifax, Sir Kingsley Wood, Captain Margesson, Sir Horace Wilson, Sir Thomas Inskip, Mr. Burgin and two or three others. These men have a peculiar responsibility; they were in power and they misled the country in both senses of the word. They are the chief political representatives of a dying plutocracy which tried to maintain itself by manipulating a democratic constitution in its own interests. They were the servants of a system; they could not in the nature of things realise that it was defunct; they had not the imagination to see the need of a new social order. The rest of us are also in our various ways to blame; most of all for not getting rid of them and the system for which they stood. Some of us are to blame for fearing power and preferring to criticise from outside. Anyway it is no good talking about "guilt." People should be displaced who are unsuitable; otherwise the tragic results of a conflict of policies and purposes which has procured for us the worst of both of all worlds will continue as it continued to the end in France.

* * *

While we are on the subject of censorship I must refer to the article which appears in the *Tribune* of July 5th, explaining why its last week's issue contained a blank page. The article censored is summarised by the Editor, who gives the text of the apology afterwards sent to him by the censor. The Editor had submitted an article on Spain which need not in fact have been submitted at all, since it contained no military secrets and no opinions that the Editor was not perfectly entitled to express. The *Tribune*, by the way, has changed very much and wholly for the better under Mr. Postgate's editorship. It has become a very valuable paper.

* * *

In a lunch hour speech at the Overseas Club on Wednesday Mme Tabouis gave an illuminating instance of the methods used to debauch the French press before the Government adopted the method of killing it by wholesale censorship. She revealed that the paper she wrote for—*L'Oeuvre* I suppose—was offered several million francs as a bribe if it would cease to print her articles!

A farmer friend of mine, thinking the Minister of Agriculture's suggestion very sensible, spent one afternoon last week cutting "firebreaks" across all his fields. That evening at the village pub he met the smallholder whose fields adjoin his. The following conversation took place. "Cutting firebreaks, sir!" "Yes, it's a horrid wasteful business, but the Minister wants us all to do it." "It is not compulsory." "No! but your fields are next mine and unless you do it too, mine won't be much good." A long pause followed. At last the smallholder began again: "I suppose our boys will be setting fire to German crops?" "Yes, I should think so." "And they will be doing the same to us?" "Yes." Another long pause, broken once more by the smallholder. "It's not compulsory is it? You are quite sure of that?" That conversation shows how hopeless it is to leave measures of this sort to voluntary initiative. If they are necessary measures they should be compulsory. If not, they should not be suggested. You cannot expect individual farmers to cut their green corn unless they know that their neighbours are compelled to do the same.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to E. G. Catford.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Statuettes of war leaders are on sale in local emporiums. Those of the Prime Minister and Lord Gort are priced at 6*d.*; Mr. Chamberlain and General Gamelin are "specially reduced" to 3*d.*—*Edinburgh Evening News.*

Next Term commences September 9th. The Air Raid, Gas and Bomb-proof 16th Century Cellars are heated in the winter months, and a sense of satisfaction is afforded, inasmuch that Dr. ——, who resides opposite the School, has promised to be with —— should anything untoward occur. —Advert. in *Yorkshire Evening News.*

We are fighting for conscience; the right to live in a free world. The cowardly objectors ought at once to lose their vote and their positions . . . —Rev. T. Chadwick, reported in the *Daily Mirror.*

All the scholars and teachers attending these schools, 14 years and over, should be transferred to a munition factory—helping their country to win the war, not wasting their time with education.—Letter in *Morecambe and Heysham Visitor.*

SHOULD LEADERS LEAD?

IN an important letter to the *Times* on Monday, Professor Gilbetr Murray analyses the unpleasant extent to which aliens of known and proved anti-Fascist tendencies are being interned in this country. He comes to the conclusion that a large part of the blame for this must go to the mass of people—"the average ignorant and unthinking man, who can see no difference between one German and another," etc. In making these decisions Professor Murray thinks that the authorities were influenced by the ignorant mass: he describes "wise and reasonable men" yielding "to public hysteria."

Then Professor Murray gives another example of what he regards as one of the most unpleasant features of war, the way in which the judgment of our leaders is upset by mass irresponsibility. He cites the instance of "the cry against Mr. Chamberlain," though he states that this "dangerous cry" comes not from the ignorant man but from "the strong party man."

Professor Gilbert Murray is a noted democrat, a man of fine judgment and fine feeling. But when he starts to analyse the public mind and the actual machinery of public decisions, he seems to me to go badly adrift. The ways in which he goes adrift are important, because exceedingly common. Let me re-analyse his analysis.

I will take his two examples in order. First, pressure of public opinion in interning aliens. Second, the pressure of public opinion about Mr. Chamberlain.

In the latter half of April, a Mass-Observation report of public opinion on this subject concluded:

(1) Literally not a single person contacted during the investigation felt that aliens should be interned *en masse.*

(2) "There is as yet no sign that the press campaign for internment has fully registered on the masses, but there is every sign that the situation is developing and especially that *it is becoming the socially done thing to be anti-.*"

Until various newspapers and other leaders of public opinion began a clamour for internment, there was little feeling on the subject in the press, among "the ignorant." For ignorant, ordinary people, are, on the whole, ready to be tolerant of their neighbours—that is one reason why politics based on anti-Semitism have failed so miserably in this country.

It needed several weeks of intensive campaigning, from powerful upper class and *responsible* quarters, before ordinary people decided that aliens ought to be interned. Events in Holland and Belgium naturally accelerated the process, but if the main influence of opinion leadership had been towards a reasonable policy for aliens, and if responsible editors and ministers had openly taken up this line, public opinion would have followed. As it was, we never had a word from any responsible person explaining over the radio or in the mass papers the distinctions that could be made between different sorts of aliens. Little was done to prevent the phrase "Fifth Column" becoming a stunt. So, when we repeated our survey in the middle of May the whole atmosphere had changed: many people who a month before were inclined to be tolerant of aliens were now almost pogrom minded.

Ordinary people are not ignorant in any absolute sense. They are only ignorant on matters in which they have not been instructed. If our leaders want to carry the country with them on any subject, it is their job to put the facts clearly before the public, and thus to extend the area of "informed opinion." That is democracy. It isn't true that there are certain people called leaders who know the facts and who are "wise," who try to get decent things done, but are forced to do the wrong thing by "public hysteria." Yet this theory of democracy has become extremely common in recent years.

Now Professor Murray's second point. Mr. Chamberlain was one of the keenest advocates of the idea that leaders need not lead. The other day he told America that he had always known nothing could be done to arouse the British worker until bombs started falling. He meant this. It is part of his whole attitude as a national leader. He and his colleagues never realised that people were longing to be led, and that a vast new machinery exists for instructing people—press, film, radio, jazz, modern poster technique, not to mention the Ministry of Information. In adopting this attitude, Mr. Chamberlain was only following in the footsteps of his predecessors. Baldwin refused to rearm because the public didn't think it was a good idea: he never considered the possibility of his *leading* public opinion and getting the people to see the facts for themselves.

Mr. Chamberlain introduced a new treatment of the problem. By the time he came to power, public opinion on armaments had of its own accord developed, largely under the independent influence of the Churchill group, whose endless warnings percolated throughout the population. Superficially Mr. Chamberlain bowed to public opinion and started rearming expensively. He built up in the public mind such a terrific picture of Britain's strength and of a comparatively easy victory, that when the facts emerged in the military field, ordinary ignorant people, studiously kept ignorant of the true position, were dazed. The result was a feeling that we had been deceived and let down.

If Mr. Churchill considers Mr. Chamberlain should remain in his War Cabinet, the public are entitled to have explained to them *why.* It is the job of the Prime Minister, busy though he is, to explain the matter to the people. He could easily do so if he gave ten minutes to the subject on the radio. In the absence of any clear statement on this subject, the public can hardly be blamed for feeling worried when they think that those who let them down before are still in positions of major responsibility. In ignoring public opinion on this subject I believe that our leadership is endangering its whole future at a time when it needs to be stronger than ever before in our history.

Mass-Observation did a statistical survey on the subject in four type areas during the early part of last week, which showed that 18 per cent. thought Chamberlain should remain in the Cabinet, while 8 per cent. were indifferent, or thought he might as well stay (though most of these expressed some doubts), 62 per cent. definitely wanted him out of the Cabinet, while 12 per cent. held no opinion on this subject.

When one considers that this degree of hostility is held in the face of the Parliamentary statements of the Prime Minister and other prestige leaders, and when one also reads the tone of the verbatim comments, it is impossible to arrive at any other conclusion than that here is an exceptionally strong feeling, potentially explosive. During the past few days there is every sign that the criticism has increased rather than decreased. At the end of the week the British Institute of Public Opinion made a national cross-section: results published in the *News Chronicle* (July 8th) showed: 77 per cent. in favour of Mr. Chamberlain going and only 23 per cent. for his retention.

Professor Murray calls this "public hysteria." He would apparently advocate leaving it to stew in its own juice. I disagree.

There are two courses of action open. Either to bow to public opinion, or to lead public opinion. The function of leaders is to do the latter.

Like Professor Murray " I tremble for any democracy which yields either to party faction or to mob hysteria." Unfortunately democracy has frequently yielded to both in the past ten years. But it wasn't mob hysteria which got us Mr. Churchill as Prime Minister. It was outraged public opinion, mixed with common sense. It is still common sense that makes the mass of people want to be sure that our leadership is now 100 per cent. effective. Mr. Churchill, in power largely because of his hold on public opinion, has presumably satisfied himself on this subject. He would be " wise and reasonable " to satisfy the huge majority of the population who believe him and in him.

TOM HARRISSON

HE DIGGED A PIT

THE French who did not wish to fight
Were the ultra Left and the Fascist Right;
The victor managed a *coup de main*
And France is hoist on her own Pétain.

SAGITTARIUS

SOUP AND MORALS

A FRENCH-CANADIAN M.P., Mr. J. F. Pouliot, who is described as "an inveterate opponent of divorce," has made an interesting proposal in the Quebec Legislature. He urges that divorced women should be compelled to work in canteens making soup for soldiers. I have myself never been an enthusiast for divorce: I have always held that men and women who are happily married are as good citizens as those who have been through the divorce courts. At the same time, I think Mr. Pouliot's suggestion is a little unfair to soldiers. Has he any evidence that divorced women have any particular gift for making soup? Unless he has, it seems to me monstrous to propose the loosing of a horde of inexpert cooks on the defenceless infantry of Canada. Mr. Pouliot possibly does not know that soup, ill made, can be an instrument of torture. Double the proper allowance of pepper, and you can leave a whole regiment gasping. Polite men eat their soup, however vile; but I have seen them eating it with tears in their eyes. Salt, again, has to be added with a genius as delicate as that of a fan-painter. The little more and how much it is! The very much more, and the diner feels like a castaway in an open boat who has tried to assuage his thirst with salt-water under an equatorial sun. To drink over-salted soup is to be pickled inside.

Equally objectionable is the soup that is brought to table with a greasy scum on the surface. I have met with this in English hotels, where presumably no fat was allowed to be wasted. I have met with it in a small Italian hotel, where the cook and the waiter had begun the day by throwing plates at each other in what appeared to be a quarrel and the cook, no doubt overwhelmed by emotion, had poured an entire bottle of olive oil into the soup he was making for lunch. There is no end, indeed, to the miseries that can be inflicted on the human palate, gullet and intestines by soup. Who has not tasted ox-tail soup after the first spoonful of which he felt that he had swallowed a portion of the lake of fire and brimstone said to be reserved for the damned? What is the secret of the concocting of such stuff? Is it that the cook is a sadist and pours in Worcester sauce recklessly, even hilariously, two or three tablespoons to the pint?

Not quite so objectionable is the soup that has no taste at all, but it is curiously disheartening. I have had it in a small French hotel the proprietor of which was just retiring and was determined not to waste an unnecessary sou on his guests. He called it *soupe verte*, and I sometimes wondered at his going to the expense even of making it green. It tasted merely like ordinary hot water—perhaps hot water in which dishes had been washed. Possibly it was the dishes that gave it its colour.

If I had thought of it at the time, I might have inquired on these various occasions whether the culprit cooks were divorced or not. It would be interesting to know whether divorced or married or even single people make the best cooks. It is all important, indeed, to know this if Mr. Pouliot's suggestion to install divorced women in canteens is adopted. Among my own friends, I confess, the standard of cooking in the houses of those who have been divorced is fairly high. But the experience of one person is necessarily limited. Even my married friends have good enough cooks—cooks, at least, that are good enough for me. In the circumstances, I am not absolutely convinced that merely to have been through the divorce court qualifies a woman for so important a position as that of a cook.

It may be that Mr. Pouliot is indifferent to cookery. It would be strange if this were so, however, since he comes of a race that prides itself on the artistry of its dishes. There are Frenchmen who tell you that there is only one restaurant in the world where you can get a certain perfect trout cooked in a certain perfect way, and only one chef in the world who can prepare it. If this is so, why propose to treat cookery as if it were anybody's job? Why ask of your cooks no other merit except that they have been divorced? We do not treat the other arts in this free-and-easy fashion. No one has yet suggested that divorced Englishwomen should be compelled to dance in the Vic-Wells ballet. Nor has any one proposed that divorced Englishmen should be compelled to play the trombone and other brass instruments in the B.B.C. orchestra. Yet is not our food as essential to our happiness as ballet-dancing and symphony music? My own view is that it is. Hence I am opposed to any movement for turning our kitchens into penitentiaries for divorced women.

And, after all, why this desire to punish people with whose theories about life one disagrees? We cannot be too careful in this matter, since we do not know when our own turn for punishment may come, those of whom we disapprove having become the majority. In this fantastic world it is not over-fantastic to conceive the possibility that a time will come when among the adult population the divorced will outnumber the married. Divorce may easily become an epidemic as a result of what is called an ideology. In such a world men and women would divorce each other fanatically, wearing shirts of some vivid colour in demonstration of their high principles. Married men and women—men and women who determinedly remained married—would be regarded as contumacious heretics, and punished accordingly. How would Mr. Pouliot like it if, in such a world, women who remained married were compelled to become cooks and faithful husbands were conscripted for the Navy?

Yet things as odd have happened as a result of the whirligig of fanaticism. It is not so long since men and women were punished for not believing in God: in our own time, we have seen men and women punished for believing in God. We may yet see the same reversal of top-dog in the matter of birth-control. Not very long ago it was regarded as a crime to advocate birth-control: it is still so regarded in some countries. On the other hand, a brilliant modern scientist has stated in print that, if he were dictator, one of the things he would do would be to suppress organised opposition to birth-control—in other words, I take it that he would fine anti-birth-control enthusiasts or send them to gaol.

There is scarcely any subject in regard to which it is not possible for human beings to become fanatical. What a waste of emotional energy has been lavished in denunciation of betting, smoking, dancing, play-acting, popular education, and, indeed, on nearly everything a human being can do or take part in! I know two or three men who are fanatical in their hatred of the use of cosmetics by women. They would if they had their way—to borrow a phrase from the officer who recently wanted to see Mr. Cyril Connolly arrested—have them " put in the coop." Even more men, I think, are roused to a frenzy of hatred by the sight of tinted finger-nails. I met a venerable man in a public-house the other evening who passionately demanded why beer should be taxed and these monstrosities allowed to go free. He said that the sight of them made him sick. " You know the B——," he said, naming a public-house on the other side of the street. " Well, there's a barmaid there—you never saw such nails. Paints them a different colour every day. Sometimes they're red—looks as if she'd been drawing a rabbit." He squeezed his cheeks up till his eyes were almost closed with disgust at the memory. " I simply won't let her serve me," he went on. " If she comes up to me, I say, ' Not ready yet, thank you,' and wait for the other barmaid. I can't drink beer in a glass that had been handled by a woman with nails like that. Nails? They're not nails—they're claws."

There are other people whose fanaticism expends itself on smoking. I once knew a man who said that it was worse than drinking, and this was not because he was moderate in his detestation of drinking. To go about with a pipe in your mouth was in his eyes at least as bad as being divorced. If he could have sent smokers to gaol, I am sure he would gladly have done so. It is greatly to the credit of smokers, it seems to me, that though they must now be in a majority, they have never yet sought to punish a fellow-man for being an inveterate non-smoker.

I have a considerable respect for fanatics of this kind. I have no doubt they are sincerely convinced that, if everybody behaved like themselves—gave up tobacco or tea or whatever it may be—the world

would be a better place. It is no use trying to make all human beings behave or think alike, however. They cannot do that even in the Totalitarian States. Some people will always go on eating onions or sucking peppermint drops, and other people will go on hating people who eat onions or suck peppermint drops. Again, some people, like myself, have a passion for iron railings as a symbol of isolation from the streets: most people, however, as has become clear lately, hate iron railings as forbidding things in both senses of the word. We differ even on such small matters as the beauty or otherwise of geraniums and yellow calceolarias.

Now, if we were all like Mr. Pouliot, we should be demanding the immediate penalisation of those from whom we differ. To his conscripted Regiment of Divorced Husbands we should want to add conscripted regiments of smokers or non-smokers or onion-eaters and all sorts of men. And the Army canteens would be crowded, not only with divorced women, but with women who had plucked eyebrows or tinted nails or who used lipstick. I doubt whether the canteen would hold all the women of whom some people or other disapprove. And of one thing I am sure. If they did, the soup would be terrible.

Y.Y.

"LES PAUVRES GARS . . ."

"HULLO there, Jean, hullo—pst, pst—*Jean!*"

"Comment, quoi?—Monsieur?—alors, quoi? Ah, tiens. . . .

"Of course, I remember now, *naturellement*. . . . You hired my boat at St. Jean de Luz. . . . That was for the blockade of Bilbao, when the British ships were all there. . . . It seems a long way off now, *hein?* I took you off to see old Jean Patates—Potato Jones, you called him!—aboard his ship. *Mais oui, Monsieur*, and you sent me a cutting of your story afterwards. I couldn't read it but one of the *camarades* could, and we all laughed. *Sacré Jean Patates! Et puis tiens*, that's funny! Did you see a ship sunk right inside the harbour here, with her funnel and masts showing? That's his old ship, the Marie Something-or-other, he beached her there the other day, I don't know what happened. . . . And then one summer you came back on holiday and we went out fishing. . . .

"What a change, eh? What a change and what a business, *quelle histoire*. . . . I'm a reservist, of course, I was called up at the start. Called up at Bayonne, and I've been in a trawler, minesweeping, since then. You remember Félix—'Potin,' we called him, he used to make such a row at the *bistro?* Poor Félix, he had no luck; his trawler was blown up a month ago, minesweeping, all gone. . . . Then there was Georges, and Paolo (a real Basque, he was), and poor old Yves from Brest—'Yves-Mort,' you know why. I don't know what's become of them.

"What a story, ah, yes, what a story and what sadness, what a disaster for us all. *Pauvre France!* It's inconceivable, we can't believe it, we don't understand any more. We don't try to understand any more. We are like men dead already, you understand, Monsieur? We can't believe what's happened, we can't think any more about it, we don't know any longer what we should think.

"The *camarades* don't know what to make of it. Some of them say, the war's over in France, there's an amnesty, why can't we go home? Some I know here were at Dunkirk; they say it wasn't war any longer, it was just slaughter, savagery, there was nothing they could do. They don't know yet how they ever got out of it. The Boche planes were everywhere, killing, killing. . . .

"We can't read the English papers and no one tells us what has happened in France. Most of the boys say, all they want now is the soil of France. They want to go back to their families, to their homes if they have any, to work and keep their wives and children if they're alive. They won't fight for the Boche, never fear, they won't work for him either, they'll just work on the land and live in peace. . . . But others say, no, there's no France to go to, it's all part of Germany now. They'll force us to be Germans, there'll be no peace for us there. Is that true, Monsieur? Have the Germans really got all France? Are we slaves to them now?

"Complete capitulation, you say, and only an armistice the Boches can denounce when they like? Then it's no use going back there. If we stay here and fight with the English, at least we'll be free till death comes to us. I think that, and I'll fight if I can, and some of the *camarades* will too—those who saw their homes destroyed and know they have nothing to go back to. But most of us don't know even if our wives and children are alive or dead, and *they* don't know where we are. Is there no way to get into touch with them?

"Fight with the English—yes, but now what has happened to us? Is it true that the English shelled our ships at Oran—that the Dunkerque was sunk? It's true. . . . I heard one of our officers say a lot of our chaps were killed. Is that true, too? . . . But it's beyond everything, Monsieur, it's not possible, *on devient fou*. . . . The first fleet action of the war, and it's between the French and the English. . . . I had a good pal in the Dunkerque, *bon Dieu, bon Dieu*. . . .

"All that is a nightmare, one can't believe what is happening. One can't see the reason for it. We had a fine navy, Monsieur, our new ships were the best in the world; we were stronger than the Boches and the Italians put together at sea. We hadn't fought a battle, and then our Government hands us over to the Boche without fighting. It's mad, it's mad. . . .

"Pétain! Pétain, the old soldier, the man we were told was the saviour of France. . . . And then the Admiral at Oran. But if he wouldn't fight the Boche, why should he prefer to fight you? Our ships were no more use to us anyhow, were they? We couldn't use them, we had to lay them up or hand them over? Then why not hand them over to our friends? Why have our poor lads killed to prevent our friends from taking them?

"I tell you one thing, Monsieur, and I hope you'll write it somewhere, because it's the only sure truth that comes out of all this. *Ce sont les pauvres gars qui écopent*—it's the poor lads who catch it, every time. That's where you here seem to be luckier than we've been in France, as far as we can tell.

"In France we had men at the top who betrayed us, even if they didn't mean to at first—*demi-traitres*, half-traitors who thought of themselves before they thought of us and then, when they'd let Hitler get his foot in the door, let the whole house go. . . .

"Here we don't see that happening, and we don't think the Boche will get here easily, with your fleet and your air force and all the troops you have at home now to prevent him. You seem to trust your leaders and you've got people in charge who get things done—even terrible things. . . .

"But don't forget we've seen the *Blitzkrieg* and we know what it's like, and most of you don't realise what's coming. But whatever happens here, Monsieur, don't you let anyone tell you he can make a half-way peace with Hitler.

"You can only fight to the end or go down altogether, without knowing if your country can ever come to life again. We think you'll fight and some of us are ready to fight with you; there's nothing else worth doing now, if France is finished and the Boche has hold of her.

"All the same, Monsieur, what a disaster for us Frenchmen, what a shame, what sadness. . . . Who would have thought it could come like that, so soon, so hard. Ah, *pauvre France*. . . ."

DAVID SCOTT

CHU CHIN CHARING CROSS ROAD

AN amusing book might be written about Orientalism in literature and the theatre in England and France during the past hundred years. It is, of course, a large subject, and account would have to be taken of Loti and Flaubert, Kipling and Conrad, as well as of a great deal of rubbish, but it should be possible to see the whole proceeding in perspective, as something belonging to the past, for "the East," from Tunis to Tokyo, has to be thought of nowadays in terms of aerodromes, pipe-lines and dockyards. Sometimes literature, sometimes tripe, sometimes between the two, writings that provided an escape to a glamorous "Orient" found and held an enormous, sentimental public. Between the tittuping geishas of Old Nippon and the sweating gentlemen of the Foreign Legion lay half a world of raw material for weavers of dreams. Twenty-five years ago, when *Chu Chin Chow* was first produced, a colourful leg-opera for the war-weary who wanted something more luscious than *The Bing Boys*, even the semi-illiterate had developed an appetite for the "Oriental." *The Garden of Allah*, the *Indian Love Lyrics*, and the "Japanese" operas of Gilbert and Sullivan were known to the millions; *The Sheikh* was to come later. Meanwhile copies of Omar Khayyam lay about all over the place, bound, as often as not, in limp puce suède, the mere touch of which, to fingers used to cheap hard bindings, was enough to suggest Eastern softness and luxury. The simple hedonism of the Rubaiyat—a flask of wine, a book of verse, and *Thou*—was easily comprehensible and had achieved a prodigious popularity. Hedonism ("Any Time's Kissing Time") is the keynote of *Chu Chin Chow*, which contains most of the conventional ingredients of popular Orientalism. The eye is teased by a lavish, quasi-realistic local colour that never was on sea or land. The libretto is all thees and thous and yeas and nays, and aims at a picturesque ancientry with a "How now, Abdullah!" or a "What wouldst thou, thou jasmine-bud?" or a

"Take her and chain her in my cave of jewels!" (there seems to be something vaguely Freudian about this.) Frequent allusions to Allah and to Baghdad (pronounced either *Bugdud* or *Barg-dard*) tell us plainly that we are in the Middle East. All the conventional machinery of "Eastern" sex-appeal is brought into action—brutal tyrants and sinuous dancing girls; allusions to concubines, harems, and "desert lovers"; a slave market.

At a performance of *Chu Chin Chow* in the year 1917 a soldier from the Dominions turned to the person next to him and said, "What is this, anyway? A phantasmagoria?" The present production at the Palace Theatre is announced as "an immortal spectacle." Be that as it may, it would not be far off the mark to call it a pantomime based on the tale of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. When first produced it caught and held the public lack of taste, and many of us who saw it in early adolescence thought it wonderful; so, evidently, did many of our elders. To-day, perhaps, there is less glamour in Orientalism than in, say, reminiscences of a quiet life in Beechy Bucks or Red Devon by the Sea, but it will be interesting to see how the public responds. On the whole, one has an impression that the new production is less splendid than the old. The swirl of navels and yashmaks is less overwhelming, and where is the camel of yesteryear? It is true that a white goat, very clean and docile, puts in an appearance: it watches the antics of the bipeds around it with the cynically tolerant air of its kind. Also, an ass is led across the stage—twice. If we miss the farouche appearance of Oscar Asche and the serpentine white arms of Lily Brayton, Lyn Harding gives a villainous urbanity to Abu Hasan, while Rosalinde Fuller, with her gipsy beauty and her posse of desert girls, is all fire and glamour. Jerry Verno, as Ali Baba, brings the right robust jollity of the music hall comedian to his part, and it is he who is responsible for putting across the "message" of the piece—yes, it has a message—that marriage and conjugal fidelity are a bore, and mistresses are more exciting than wives. His wife, poor Mahbubah (Sydney Fairbrother), dowdy in black and white—for the small-size matron—keeps her end up against heavy odds: "my wrinkled will-o'-the-wisp," he calls her, "my crinkled caryatid." Dennis Noble as Nur Al-Huda vocalises with manly resonance, and Bruce Dargavel, stitching in a twilit bazaar, renders the Cobbler's Song so efficiently that one wonders why he sticks to his last.

WILLIAM PLOMER

THE COMMUNISTS IN FRANCE

[The following communication analysing the position of the Communists in relation to the disaster in France reaches us from Mr. Gollancz.]

Sir,—Since the fall of France, there has been a tendency for Communists to say to people like myself, "I told you so. What has happened in France has proved up to the hilt how correct Communist policy has been since the outbreak of the war. It is now plain to everyone that, in the line you have taken, you have been a traitor to the working class."

The boot is on the other leg. The French tragedy shows that we of the Labour movement who protested against the Communist "line" were a thousand times right, and that that line has objectively assisted in the worst betrayal of the working class in modern history.

First of all, what *did* we say?

We said: "A 'stop the war' movement in the allied countries, if of any magnitude or success, could result only in making a smashing victory for Hitler more probable. It is fantastically unrealistic to imagine that it would bring the war to an end by means of revolutions in *all* countries, with a Socialist peace as a result: to argue like this ignores, among other things, (a) the Gestapo organisation, with its immense power to stamp out the first flames of revolt, (b) the colossal strength and efficiency of the Hitler war machine, and the appalling speed with which it moves. If a 'stop the war' movement were seriously to undermine national resistance in the allied countries, the result would be a Hitler conquest long before any revolutionary movement in Germany could even begin to overthrow the Nazi regime. Moreover, at the moment when, in one or other of the allied countries, defeat seriously threatened, at that moment the pro-Fascist forces *inside* the country would immediately 'sell out' to the enemy, and impose a Fascist regime, dependent upon Hitler. Once that had happened all possibilities of 'revolution' on the part of Communists or anybody else would be at an end: for to talk of revolution in such circumstances is to talk, with criminal frivolity, in the language of the barricades, instead of in that of the present era of tanks, aeroplanes and Gestapo. Once the German army were in control, backed up by a native puppet government, resistance would be *too late*."

As recently as a fortnight before the French collapse, one of the most distinguished Communists in England, to whom I put this argument, replied as follows: "You are absolutely wrong. It does look as if success by Hitler in France is imminent. But what will happen in the moment of defeat is that the French working class, led by the Communist Party, will rise up, turn the war into a real people's war of national defence, and 'find a way' [nauseating formula, which covers a loose and lazy refusal to think with clearness and precision] to defeat the German and French fascists: and the Soviet Union will help them by at once declaring war on Germany." I quote my friend's remark (typical of what Communists were saying everywhere) to show to what depths of folly intelligent men can sink if they refuse to make a realistic and up-to-the-minute appraisal, as Lenin nearly always made, of the various forces and factors in a given situation, and prefer to theorise in a vacuum of their own creation.

And I ask—who has been right? Hasn't the appalling thing that has happened in France proved the correctness of our analysis? Hasn't it proved how fatuous was that of our opponents?

The *Daily Worker*, observing the betrayal of France by Pétain, Laval, Baudouin, and the rest, shouts "We told you so." A poor and bitter sort of triumph. They pursued a policy which, they calculated, would defeat Fascism "everywhere": it has failed so disastrously that moment by moment, with the horrible fatality of a gigantic landslide, the country of the Revolution and the Commune is passing ever more completely into the camp of Fascism. Is it the part of a good Marxist or a sane man to *fail* in preventing an irreparable tragedy, and then to cry "I told you so: see how our enemies have betrayed us!" On the contrary, it is the part of a good Marxist and a sane man to act in such a way that *the tragedy does not occur*, and then to give the shout of victory "Look! Our enemies are in flight!"

The French Communists failed so to act. Declaring day in and day out that this was an Imperialist war, that the working class had no interest in it, and that the major enemy was British finance, they undermined the French resistance to Hitler as surely as did, with a different purpose, the French Fascists themselves: and the result, as anybody could have foreseen, was not to create a social revolution in France, but to make Hitler's victory over France—the victory of Hitler and the French Fascists over the French working class—inevitable. And now, when the disaster to which they have contributed is staring them in the face, now, when it is *too late*, they distribute illegal leaflets, strike in Paris, and so brave the concentration camp and the firing squad with that heroism which has always been their noble characteristic, but which now cannot influence (except very remotely and indirectly, by way of example) the progress of what is at once the greatest tragedy and the greatest opportunity that the world has ever known.

If from the beginning the French Communists, while unrelentingly attacking Capitalism and Imperialism, had at the same time *led* the defence of the French people against Hitler, then, as the danger drew nearer, they would have been in a position *to take over the war*: they could have put up a revolutionary defence against Hitler, and could at the same time have defeated "their own" traitors. There would have been no question of not defending Paris: and France would have been fighting to this day.

If I am asked "How could the French Communists have done this, in view of their suppression?" then I reply two things. First, they should have made every effort to *prevent* suppression, instead of giving the French Government all possible excuses for suppressing them. Secondly, even if nevertheless they had been partially or wholly suppressed, their message could not have failed to rouse all the common people of France if it had been the inspiring one of *revolutionary national defence* against Fascism, the spearhead of which, they should never have ceased to explain, was the Nazi offensive, with "their own" Fascists as its camp-followers.

* * *

Here in Britain there has been some change of "line." But while the *Daily Worker* now talks defence in one column, in the next it attacks those in the United States who are sending us the arms with which to defend ourselves, on the ground that they are "dragging America into the war." A few days ago an International Brigadier was asked whether he and his comrades would help to train certain L.D.V.s in the methods of the Spanish War. He replied "No: we don't support the war yet." *Yet* is the operative word. If not *yet*, with Hitler at the gate, then in Heaven's name *when*? Have they learned nothing from the tragedy of France? VICTOR GOLLANCZ

THE MOVIES

"La Charette Fantôme," at the Embassy (on Monday).
"Convoy," at the New Gallery.

Perhaps by the time these words are in print France will have been proclaimed a province of Hitler's federated Europe. One more battered, newsless country! We register the shock politically, in calculations of the advance upon ourselves. A map confronts us blankly. Dieppe has been bombed by the R.A.F.? Good—but there flickers the memory of peeling arcades, and friendly faces in *bistros*, along a charming old waterfront. The sense of tragedy comes trivially and slowly—more slowly than Hitler's moves—and while we are still haunted by fleeing peasants and a burning countryside, the Gestapo is making its swoop. One looks up at one's shelf of French writers, and the eye moves uneasily when it reaches the names of the living: Gide, Malraux, Valéry, Julien Green, Jouhandeau—which among those will have escaped? The new French film at the Embassy, Duvivier's *La Charette Fantôme*, is probably also the last we shall see for a long time. That in itself is no good reason for going to see it, but Duvivier possesses conspicuously many of the talents we think of as being French. First among these I should put the touch that discovers a new poetry in realism. Clair had it, and he could make images dance while still fixing our attention on a detective running after a crook or a bus swinging round the corner. Though Duvivier is a long way from Clair (his fantasy leans to the spectral and Villonesque), you will find in *La Charette Fantôme* a similar inspiration drawn from common life. Down-and-outs clustered round a soup-kitchen on Christmas Eve; old popular songs and hilly cobbled streets; the blare of a Salvation Army band; children sprawling on the skeleton staircase outside a tenement; a drinking den in which the air is as thick as the wine; snow on huddled roofs; ravings in the public ward of a hospital; the faces of the very poor, haunted, clownish, with a terrible finality—these are the images which have obsessed him in making the film. They are realised with grim intensity. The scene of a Salvation Army meeting, with the choir singing louder and louder, while half-drunken men and women jump up to shout their confessions, is startlingly achieved; here in a corner a bearded tramp grins as he chews a crust, there an old crone mumbles endlessly into space. This is not a film for those who dislike *bravura*. Duvivier dyes his blacks black and his whites are shining white. The macabre detail throughout is excellent, but I could have wished the faces of the Salvation lasses a shade less sweet; a pimple or two, a pair of specs, would not have been out of the picture. However Micheline Francey succeeds in looking inviolably angelic and keeping character. Pierre Fresnay as the mocking, self-tortured, drunken glass-blower whom she loves gives a superb performance—as impressive in its moments of quiet as in its climaxes. The "ghost wagon" of the title, by the way, refers to the legend that the man who dies on the last stroke of December will have to take the driver's seat for the coming year. We hear the creaking of its wheels once or twice through the story, but its appearance at the end is a mistake. It would be enough if it sounded in dying ears.

Convoy has been widely advertised as the "best film about the Navy," and so it is, vivid, well-documented, with a spectacular battle-piece in which the *Deutschland* is all but sent to the bottom. Both as entertainment and as propaganda for the least publicised part of our naval effort, it is a success from the word go. Many of the convoy scenes were actually taken in the North Sea; there is Mr. Clive Brook, as distinguished as ever, raising binoculars and refusing the cups of coffee that follow him into action; the story, which is the expected love triangle, has been reduced to a minimum. Nothing, in its way, could be more satisfactory. But compare it, say, with a documentary like *Behind the Guns* and you will begin to note discrepancies. Why is it that the men working in arms factories were shown as dignified and individual human beings, while the lower deck of *Convoy* swarms with caricatures which might have come out of *Punch*? I still remember several faces of iron-smelters from the documentary, though it is nearly a fortnight since I saw the film, but those in *Convoy* vanish from the mind as soon as they leave the screen. Good though it is, *Convoy* would have been twice as good if fiction had been kept out. *Drifters* proved to be dramatic enough even for a fiction-loving public. Then why should we not have a war *Drifters*?

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Distant Point," at the Unity Theatre.

To the isolated backward community of a minute railway station on the Trans-Siberian railway an accident brings the coach of a Red Army General. The reactions of the few inhabitants to his presence, compounded of old-time deference and Young Communist League naivety, and the General's quickening of their interest in their undeveloped community make up the elements of what must be an agreeable Soviet comedy. It is a play with a message, rather than a propaganda play, an exposition of the Soviet virtues, of the "code," comradeliness, courage and communal self-development. But the play is neither so dry nor so priggish as that sounds; Afinoenor, in fact, is an adult writer and makes good satirical fun of Y.C.L. priggishness. Besides the satire, there is a pleasant humour and the character of the General is a decent human conception, and humane enough to satisfy the most timid of liberals. Well produced and well acted it would be an effective piece. The Unity production is, frankly, very unfinished. The General has a good grasp of his part; one actor is competent and professional as an unreformed priest, and the Y.C.L. daughter makes a brave effort. For the rest the production is slow: the small theatre is yet too big for many of the speeches to be audible: the actors huddle and whisper, and their hands are awkwardly evident. One knows the difficulties under which the Unity work but at present (time will no doubt improve all this) it can only safely be recommended to enthusiasts of Russia or the theatre, who will be interested and agreeably surprised, perhaps, to see how a moral background can give solidity to a play without spoiling it.

British War Artists at the National Gallery

It is an excellent thing that painters should be officially employed to record whatever aspects of the war they can seize upon, but a pity that writers cannot be similarly used, for there seems to be no good reason why they should be left to cook up recollections in tranquillity instead of taking copious notes on the spot. At the National Gallery there may be seen the beginnings of what may prove a colossal expansion of the Imperial War Museum. Eric Kennington and Edward Ardizzone are the stars. Kennington's portrait heads in pastel are always striking. His training as a sculptor enables him to treat a head as a bony structure covered with a complex tissue deserves to be treated, and his pictures are not dashed off, but wrought. They bring out the heroic aspect of the ordinary seaman or stoker without blurring the ordinariness: he convinces us (if we need convincing) that the inarticulate Englishman has a heart of oak. He is generally best with rough-hewn, homely faces "of the people"; his *gros bonnets* seem less sympathetically treated, and a bleak or photographic quality (as in the portrait of Lord Halifax) is apt to creep in.

There is little of the heroic in Ardizzone's presentation of the war. In fact his soldiers are his old friends of the back garden and the saloon bar now dressed in khaki and caught in new and peculiar situations. He reminds us that in wartime people still eat, drink, sleep, laugh, and make eyes; dogs still nose about, washing is still hung up to dry, hens still scratch on dunghills. He comes nearer than any other artist to sharing the humorous fatalistic spirit of the Englishman at war. *Priest Begging for a Lift* and *Her First Communion* are not merely war pictures but little masterpieces of irony, with hints of Rowlandson and Daumier. Some of these war painters are content with very conventional effects, and some have had much less dramatic material than others to work on, but Eric Ravilious produces a new and impressive vision of war machines, ships particularly, making their clear-cut patterns against earth, sea and sky; and Anthony Gross, who deals with scenes of enlistment and training, has very satisfactorily solved the problem of catching an impression which is of immediate value as a "document" and at the same time pleasing as a picture. With a few washes of colour and a ballet of light, dancing, pointed pen-strokes he seizes the rhythms of gymnasium or drill ground, the ant-like movements of masses of men preparing for war.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, July 13th—
- Professor Haldane on A.R.P., Trinity Church Hall, Finchley Road, 8.

SUNDAY, July 14th—
- One-Day School of Manchester Branch of the S.C.R., at Royal Oak Hotel, Alderley Edge. Lectures by Prof. Hemsted, D. N. Pritt. Partcs. from 104 Birch Lane, Manchester, 13.
- C. E. M. Joad: "Thomas Hardy Centenary," Conway Hall, 11.
- Opening of English-Chinese Art Exhibition, Everyman Cinema, Hampstead. Admission free. 5.

MONDAY, July 15th—
- Poetry Recital by L. A. G. Strong and Helen Spalding, in aid of Red Cross, Central Hall, Westminster, 1.15.
- Pat Sloan: "Russia and the War," 2 Keats Grove, N.W.3, 8.
- Anglo-Soviet Concert, Unity Theatre, 8. Tickets 1s. 6d. and 1s.
- "Cottage to Let," Streatham Hill.

TUESDAY, July 16th—
- Miss D. S. Crewe: "The Women's Plan," Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1, 1.
- Francis E. Pollard: "State Power and Moral Principle," Friends House, 1.20.
- Poetry Recital by Lorna Davies, British Drama League, 8.
- "Women Aren't Angels," Strand.

WEDNESDAY, July 17th—
- Fabian Society Lunch, Stefan Lorant on "The Propaganda Weapon," Royal Hotel, Upper Woburn Place, 12.45. Tickets 2s. 9d.
- Recital of the works of J. S. Bach by the Huttenbach Trio, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury Way, 8.

Correspondence

RECRIMINATIONS

SIR,—Those who oppose a reconstruction of the Government and the removal therefrom of those who took part in the "Peace" of Munich do not seem to understand what has caused this sudden outburst of feeling. The Pétain Government in France came into power, it seems, by constitutional means, and it is the feeling that the appeasers, patriotic Englishmen as President Lebrun is a patriotic Frenchman, might, were we the victims of any disaster, lose their nerve in the same way.

"We can never be really in danger," says Junius, "until the forms of Parliament are made use of to destroy the substance of our civil and political liberties; until Parliament itself betrays its trust, by contributing to establish new principles of government, and employing the very weapons committed to it by the collective body to stab the constitution."

It is for this reason that the more thoughtful among us are so concerned at the continued existence of the swollen and unrepresentative Conservative majority in Parliament and their leaders in the Cabinet.

PETER EVANS

39 Elvaston Place, S.W.7.

SIR,—I am sure no intelligent person would disagree with the view, so often stressed by your paper, that the politicians who so recently preached the policy of appeasement are largely responsible for our present plight. Nevertheless, I believe that Mr. Churchill has been well advised in keeping their leaders in the Government.

Let us remember that it was not men such as Reynaud and Mandel who betrayed France. It was Laval and Bonnet and others who were responsible; men who had once been in power, but, having been deposed, were free to conspire and intrigue in quiet obscurity.

I feel happier, to see the men of Munich filling unimportant posts in the Government with the full glare of publicity upon them. While they are there, they are, after all, responsible for their actions to Parliament and to the people, and above all they are under the watchful eye of the Prime Minister. I feel confident he is not one who would stand any nonsense from a group of men whom he has so lately shown up by his prophetic criticism.

If this group were to retire into obscurity I should feel much more nervous about the future.

Highways, ARTHUR SALAMAN
Stansted, Essex.

THE CIVIL SERVICE

SIR,—Already the sound of sneering at the Civil Servant, which rose to a high-pitched scream at the end of the last war, is heard.

To blame the permanent official may be to the taste of the mob, but it is wrong and it is unfair, for he is not responsible for the muddle into which Government Departments fall as soon as any strain is put upon them.

First let it be noted that Civil Servants may be divided, roughly, into two classes ("roughly" contains a hidden meaning to initiates. The concertina trousers of a now famous Treasury official were, twenty years ago, a shining example of the triumph of mind over matter.) The largest of the two divisions comprises those who can do their work competently with one hand behind their backs. This class keeps itself out of asylums for the insane by its hobbies. The black despatch cases they carry do not contain State papers. They contain seed catalogues, Gilbert and Sullivan scores, photographic printing frames (bromide), chess problems, back numbers of the *Daily Worker* and the like (if any). The slogan of this class, prior to the Russo-German pact, was "*Nitchevo*"; its motto—"Leave a letter long enough and it answers itself."

The other class contains those who have an interesting and absorbing job. They are shamefully underpaid and they are bad husbands.

But the integrity and intelligence of both groups is superb. The fault lies in the system under which they work. A good organisation is elastic, but the system throughout the Civil Service is utterly rigid. It is difficult to think of a simile for its inflexibility. Cast-iron is the word that jumps to the pen, but this is inadequate for metals are composed of molecules which do something or other, whereas the Civil Service system does nothing except be inert.

No official dare vary the routine in the slightest particular. To be keen is no virtue. Such a quality may attract the notice of a superior who observes: "This so-and-so is dangerous; we must keep him down." Accordingly, much of the officials' time is spent in covering himself from attack. It is for this reason that every Department fears Parliamentary Questions. Ministers are just as touchy about criticism as mere mortals, and the result of a Question is that the best brains of the Department are invoked to draft witty and crushing replies. Meanwhile the work of the Department stops so far as its best brains are concerned.

May I end on a personal note? I behaved very badly as a Temporary twenty years ago. But it was marvellous fun. The Treasury were continually angry, the poor fish; my Chief laughed, God bless him; the woman Establishment Officer cried, the dear creature, and I enjoyed every second. I forgive myself though I am sorry I made you cry, Miss.

LIONEL MUNDY

28 Great Castle Street,
Oxford Circus, W.1.

I BELIEVE

SIR,—To-day graver things are happening than that I should receive an unfair review. Nevertheless, I am venturing to point out that in your current issue Mr. Joad, in his review of *I Believe*, has been unlucky enough to reveal, by the quotation he makes from it and his comment on it, that he has run his eye over a page or two and has saved himself the trouble of reading it.

The mechanism is simple. "I take it," I wrote, "that the prime cause of the present confusion of society is that it is too sickly and too doubtful frankly to use pleasure as the test of value." This sentence, taken from its context, suggests an archaic Rousseauism, of which I am not at all guilty. But it touched a chord in Mr. Joad's well-stocked memory and he exclaimed, "Aha, I know what this is about," and proceeded to ascribe to me naively hedonist views, which might have been expressed in the dear old days by what have always struck me as his grisly little playmates in the dreadier summer schools.

These views are not mine. Had Mr. Joad tried another page, he would have seen my definite statement that mankind derives some of its keenest pleasure from activities which include the practice of a beloved craft or art or science, and the care of children or the sick or the old. I am afraid Mr. Joad will not be able to bluff it out by saying he read that page, for if he had he could not have rebuked me by reminding me that "to-day we are more inclined to stress the happiness of duty than the duty of happiness." That was a point I had fully recognised.

I cannot imagine what Mr. Joad was thinking of when he described my contribution as a revolt against "the stuffiness and respectability of the nineteenth century." I dealt with no material even remotely relevant to such a subject. I wrote this contribution two years ago, when I had spent most of the preceding few years in contact with the Balkans and in contemplation of Nazi Germany, and stuffiness and respectability seemed to be as much hot news as dinosaurs and pterodactyls. Indeed the last time I heard these views attacked was in a lecture by Mr. Joad in the early twenties, which even then seemed out of date.

I find it difficult to understand a passage about religion in Mr. Joad's reference to myself. He appears to me to imply that I am in revolt against Christianity on the ground that some manifestations of it encourage the instinct for cruelty through "repression." This too must be a memory of someone else at some summer school. I can only refer readers to my contribution, where I state with some particularity that I believe that many attempts have been made by those who wish to justify and perpetrate cruelty to pervert Christian doctrine for their own purposes, but that these attempts are contrary to the primitive Christian spirit and that the great Churches have resisted the most vitally dangerous of these attempts. I am especially anxious to dissociate myself from Mr. Joad's phrase: "The hatred of the flesh fostered by Puritanism which dominated the Christian field for over 100 years." This phrase exhibits a gross ignorance of religious history which I should hate to be thought mine.

REBECCA WEST

15 Orchard Court,
Portman Square, W.1.

MOTORISTS AND SENTRIES

SIR,—One or two correspondents have described their experiences under examination by the police and military authorities. They were fortunate. Others, with motives no more sinister, have been compelled to leave the final word to the coroner.

If, as has been very properly suggested, the procedure for interrogating "suspects" is faulty and open both to wilful and ignorant abuse, the treatment reserved for motorists—and many people are still compelled to travel during the black-out—is even less compromising, and sometimes fatal. At advanced points in the line during the last war one could at least be sure that (a) sentry posts were visible to traffic by day and night, and (b) sentries would shoot to kill only after other reasonable means of arrest had failed. Nowadays, as he runs the gauntlet of the police, the soldiery and the L.D.V., the luckless traveller's only warning is a vocal challenge (often inaudible inside a closed car) and a feeble red lamp. This latter is probably the most ambiguous signal that could possibly be chosen, even when it can be distinguished plainly; and to add to the general confusion, when it is swung violently to attract attention it is precisely the same as the signal frequently employed by the police to *wave traffic-on*.

One or two extra casualties may matter little or nothing in the general melee; this, apparently, is the official view. But why should useful lives be thrown away because no one takes the trouble to rectify a stupidly inflexible system? The solution is simple: a standardised mechanical signal, after the fashion of a traffic light but of a distinctive colour or combination of colours, combined with a removable road barrier, would stop everyone without fuss or bloodshed.

Much of the machinery introduced since the beginning of the war smacks of panic rather than sane precaution. This instance is typical: and it may be assumed that if militarisation proceeds without intelligent safeguards the resultant casualties will number more than a few motorists and their passengers. Commonsense organisation, as opposed to amateurish zeal, does not betoken slackness. It is calculated to do far less harm to the nation's morale than the heavy-handed bungling that forces citizens into involuntary conflict with authority.

8 Devereux Buildings, R. POLENDINE,
Devereux Court, General Secretary,
W.C.2. The Society of
United Motorists.

GEORGE LANSBURY

SIR,—By an unfortunate printer's error, my letter asking for records of Mr. Lansbury to be sent to me had the address omitted. Perhaps you would find room for it: 45 Hendon Lane, London, N.3.

RAYMOND POSTGATE

THE LESSON OF FRANCE

SIR,—I would like to draw your attention to a statement made in Parliament by Mr. Anthony Eden, Secretary for War. It is a statement which is the cause of much concern among young men. Mr. Eden declared that all men who had registered up to the end of May had already been called up, with the exception of certain special categories. Somebody ought to ask Mr. Eden to what special categories he was referring, what they comprise, why they are still exceptions.

I am an ordinary young man of 26 (registered April 27th) and, like almost all other ordinary young men of 26, I have many friends and acquaintances, also perfectly normal, of 26 or thereabouts. I cannot believe that they are all "special categories." Nor can they. Maybe they are, maybe I am a special category too. But somebody ought to tell us. Because I do not number among my friends of my own age a single man who has been called up. And they know I have not been called up. And, since we have no reason to believe that we are all special categories, despite our diverse sizes, shapes, means of existence, occupations, we are beginning to wonder just what Mr. Eden meant.

In the meanwhile, guess what, we cannot join up. Nobody will have us. Trying to enlist, in whatever Service, if one has been registered but not called up, is like trying to find a new job in the middle of the great depression. You would never guess that the Army, Navy and Air Force authorities considered this country to be facing its most dangerous hour, its great testing time, its minute of minutes. But still, they know how to keep a secret.

And so we wait. Many of us have nothing to do; we may have jobs but no work. The Services don't want us, the civil defence arms will not enlist us (we are being called up any minute, you see), nobody wants us to dig defence works. And Mr. Eden says we have been called up. So we must rest content, like Mr. Eden. But, pray God, Mr. Eden is not really like Mr. Ernest Brown, whose attitude to the labour question was always that everybody had a job, except the unemployed. . . . "Everybody has been called up, except certain special categories."

AN ORDINARY FELLOW

Current Literature

MR. PEACOCK

THE desire for settlement comes with peculiar force to stockbrokers; but the wish of Mr. Crotchet, the retired City man of Weybridge, is common to us all. "The sentimental against the rational," said Mr. Crotchet, "the intuitive against the inductive, the ornamental against the useful, the intense against the tranquil, the romantic against the classical; these are the great and interesting controversies, which I should like, before I die, to see satisfactorily settled." A modest wish. Even those of us who have not the disputatious, metaphysical Scottish blood which Peacock had malevolently transfused into the veins of Mr. Crotchet, may join in that not very hopeful sigh. What is the good of inviting intellectuals down for the week-end unless they settle matters like these once and for all? Alas, the habit of the intellectual is to be unsettling and in both senses of the word. There is also an incurable Mr. Firedamp in every *posse* of the brainy; even when final order seems to have been achieved, there is always one bat left in the belfries.

> "There is another great question," said Mr. Firedamp, "greater than those, seeing that it is necessary to be alive in order to settle any question and this is the question of water against human woe. Wherever there is water, there is *malaria*, and wherever there is *malaria* there are the elements of death. The great object of a wise man should be to live on a gravelly hill, without so much as a duckpond within 10 miles of him, eschewing cisterns and water butts . . ."
>
> "O, for a stone-bow, to hit him in the eye."

Dr. Folliott, a Tory and a practical man, had the answer in his cellar. "The proximity of wine," he said, was of more importance "than the longinquity of water." After sufficient Burgundy the endless and cantankerous algebra of life appears lucid and limited. Wine has the triple merit of enriching the vocabulary, cheering the heart and narrowing the mind; and the sooner one cuts the cackle of the intellectuals with some good food and drink the sooner comes peace on earth. The food and drink question is fundamental in Peacock. On Samuel Butler's theory that all Radicals have bad digestions, it is clear that on the wine and food test Peacock comes out true blue Tory. There is no stab of that sublimated bellyache which drives the rest of us into progressive politics. Of course, we know that Peacock called himself a Liberal and wrote for the Liberal reviews; but the enemies of the Utilitarians considered him a joke and Hazlitt teased him for "warbling" on the wrong side of the fence.

The game Peacock played was a dangerous one and in a man less original and gifted it would have been disastrous. Peacock's virtue was that he had no political opinions in a very political age; or rather, that he had all the opinions, as a dog has fleas in order to keep himself awake by killing them. His mind kept open house and ruled the table; in literary circles that leads too often to banging the table. One can see this in the Rev. Dr. Folliott:

> Mr. MacQuedy: Then, sir, I presume you set no values on the right principles of rent, profit, wages and currency.
>
> Revd. Dr. Folliott: My principles, sir, in these things are to take as much as I can get and to pay no more than I can help. These are everyman's principles, whether they be the right principles or no. There, sir, is political economy in a nutshell.

And while we have still got it in a nutshell, it is interesting to note how strong a respect for money is ingrained in the crackling, phlegmatic temper which makes our satirists. It is strong in Iago, it is strong in Swift (the Drapier letters), Shaw is an enthusiastic accountant and Peacock's "principles" regarding paper money amount to mania. On that subject he was a Firedamp. I like to imagine his reactions when, having invited Shelley to live in Marlow, he heard that the poet was giving away his clothes and his money to the indigent inhabitants. It is always surprising when poetic justice is benevolent, and most critics have gasped with incredulous satisfaction at Peacock's luck in hooking a job with £2,000 a year or more out of the East India Company; what is significant and even more poetically fitting, is that Peacock was a success at it.

"Temporally, at least, Peacock is a link between our own age and the Age of Reason," writes Mr. Mair in a pithy and decisive introduction to three of the novels, *Headlong Hall*, *Nightmare Abbey* and *Crotchet Castle* which have just been published in one volume of the Nelson classics (2*s*.). "He lived through the French Revolution and the Great Exhibition; he could have read his first book to Nelson and his last to Bernard Shaw"—who would not have understood it—"Dr. Johnson died a year before his birth and Yeats was born a year before his death. He both preceded and survived Byron, Shelley, Keats and Macaulay; he was contemporary with Rowlandson and with Landseer."

For a satirist it was the maddest panorama; for a man liable by nature to be infected by all schools of thought and unable to resist cocking snooks at them, here was wealth. Peacock dined off his disabilities and it cannot have been displeasing to his astringent temper when he found himself not only pre-dating but surviving his victims. Some annoyance has been felt because he became a kind of reactionary by default; you ought not to pull the leg of your own party. But what more delightful occupation for one whose baptismal water had a drop of the acid of perversity in it! A Grub Street hack in his time, and one who (according to Hazlitt anyway) overpraised as wildly as any of our coterie reviewers, he sneers at the puffs of Grub Street. A hater of Scotsmen, Peacock was baptised at the Scottish kirk. (This is one of Professor Saintsbury's discoveries and very juicily he gloats over it). He scarifies Miss Philomel Poppyseed for saying true love is impossible on less than £1,000 a year but is as acute about the marriage settlements of his own characters as Jane Austen herself. Everywhere the satirist is reacting against his own wishes, his own disappointments. There is little doubt that his erratic education fostered his originality as it also failed to provide some strong stamp which would have made up his mind; there would have been no Peacock if he had gone to the University. But those sneers at the University are prolonged; and when the debates between the deteriorationists, the progressives, the transcendentalists and rational economists bore us, we cannot reject the suspicion that Peacock spent a good deal of his literary life training to be an undergraduate.

If Peacock's mind was not made up, if he snapped at both his opponents and his friends, it would be a mistake to think of him as a complete *farceur*. After the effervescence there appears a definite deposit of belief which is not party belief but is rather his century's habit of mind. The eighteenth century had formed him; he belonged moreover to that merchant and professional class which did not share, at least not directly, in the rewards of the industrial revolution. When Mr. Escot speaks against the mills in *Headlong Hall*, he is not putting a party view; he is pleading for the content of living in a world that was violently altering its form and optimistically believing that the content would look after itself. If Mr. Peacock-Escot is a reactionary, then one can only reply that it is the role of reactionaries, once they have given up their futile obstructionism, to remind us that the Sabbath was made for man, to preserve amenities and that private humanity which revolutionaries care so little about. Here is Mr. Escot, with his everything-is-as-bad-as-it-can-be-in-the-worst-of-all possible-worlds:

> You present to me a complicated picture of artificial life, and require me to admire it. Seas covered with vessels; every one of which contains two or three tyrants, and from fifty to a thousand slaves, ignorant, gross, perverted and active only in mischief. Ports resounding with life: in other words with noise and drunkenness, the mingled din of avarice, intemperance and prostitution. Profound researches, scientific inventions: to what end? To contract the sum of human wants? to teach the art of living on a little? to disseminate independence, liberty and health? No; to multiply factitious desires, to stimulate depraved appetites, to invent irrational wants, to heap up incense on the shrine of luxury, and accumulate expedients of selfish and ruinous profusion.

And on to a description of children in the cotton mills, a true piece of Dickensian phantasmagoria—"observe their pale and ghastly features, more ghastly in that baleful and malignant light, and tell me if you do not fancy yourself on the threshold of Virgil's Hell." Did that passage have any effect on the more ruthless of Peacock's readers? One doubts it. The voice of the Age of Reason was, from the point of view of the nineteenth-century Liberals, reactionary and decadent; and most of us were born into the nineteenth-century belief that a period is decadent which has arrived on the civilised plateau of static and detached self-criticism. Peacock said the wise thing in the wrong way, the detached way. It was the attached people, more vulgar, more sentimental, more theatrically subject to the illusions of the new period, who could attack child labour and the mills with some effect.

What really counted for a man as mercurial and unseizable as Peacock was the farce. Detached, isolated, hiding caution behind a fantasticating brain, silent about the private urges of his heart, unimaginative, and timid (as the scathing so often are) of "acrimonious dispute" he enjoyed the irresponsibilities of the intellect, being unable to define its responsibilities. His cruelty to his victims is merely the brain's. There he can display an extravagance which elsewhere his nature denies him. It was not resented, as far as one knows, by the victims. Shelley laughed at Scythrop in *Nightmare Abbey*. No doubt Shelley's own irresponsibility responded to Peacock's distorted picture of him torn between Harriet and Mary Godwin: "like a shuttlecock between two battledores, changing its direction as rapidly as the oscillations of a pendulum, receiving many a hard knock on the cork"—the cork!—"of a sensitive heart and flying from point to point on the feathers of a super-sublimated head."

Nowadays, the Peacock novels, as they come fragmentarily into focus, have the farcical atmosphere of the surrealist dreams. Their slapstick and their unexpected transitions, their fancy and the burlesque discussions, lead through *Alice in Wonderland* to the present. It is amusing to find present parallels for the deteriorationist and the rational economist, and Peacock chose eternal types; but without the farce and the romance, that amusement would soon become bookish and musty. Scythrop concealing his lady in the tower and lying about the movable bookcase, Mr. Toobad jumping out of the window at the sight of the "ghost" and being hooked out of the moat by the dreary scientists who are down there with their nets fishing for mermaids, Squire Headlong's experiments with explosives, Dr. Folliott's adventures with the highwaymen—this picaresque horseplay is the true stuff of the English comic tradition from Sterne and Fielding, a new gloss on the doings of the Pickwick Club. And Peacock can alternate the perfunctory or the heroic manner which our tradition especially

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FABER

requires. Gradually, as he perfected his genre, progressing from the Hall to the Abbey, from the Abbey to the Castle—I have never got as far as the Grange—Peacock balanced his extremes. Here romantic love plays its part; not the wild stuff of course, but a romance which infuses an artificial sweetness, that *faux naturel* of the eighteenth century which at once suggests the formal and the untutored. In the mad brainy world the women alone—if one excepts the highbrow Poppyseed and the awful Mrs. Glowry—have the sense and sensibility. Peacock cuts short the sighs; marriages are arranged, not made in Heaven; dowries are not forgotten, but what a delightful convention (the India clerk reminds us), marriage is.

One might expect more broadness in so keen a reader of Rabelais, but Peacock (unless my memory is bad or my ear for *double entendre* dull) appears to share the primness of Dr. Folliott, a primness one often finds among the drinkers. There is only one smoke-room remark in *Crotchet Castle*—and a very good one it is. It occurs after the cook has set her room on fire when she has fallen asleep over a treatise on hydrostatics in cookery:

> Lord Bossnowl: But sir, by the bye, how came your footman to be going into your cook's room? It was very providential to be sure but . . .
>
> Revd. Dr. Folliott: Sir, as good came of it, I shut my eyes and ask no questions. I suppose he was going to study hydrostatics and he found himself under the necessity of practising hydraulics.

I suppose it should be argued that Dr. Folliott's quarrel later on about the exhibition of an undraped female figure on the stockbroker's mantelpiece was grounded less in the prudery of the bibulous than in the general Peacockian dislike of popular education. He was against putting ideas into his footman's head. An act of benevolence, for no one knew so well as Peacock, how funny a man with an idea in his head can be.

V. S. PRITCHETT

"LA VOIX HUMAINE"

Opera. By EDWARD J. DENT. *Pelican Special.* 6*d.*

Weber. By WILLIAM SAUNDERS. *Dent.* 5*s.* 6*d.*

Verdi. By DYNELEY HUSSEY. *Dent.* 5*s.* 6*d.*

The Music Review, No. 2. *Heffer.* 4*s.*

In the beginning was—not the word, but more probably something in the nature of song—an untempered, onomatopoeic declamation directed at our fellow beings with a view to securing co-operation and the satisfaction of desires. Such a method of communication, purely emotive in origin and aim, reappears at all times in our tendency, at moments of emotional tension, powerfully to accent certain words, to yell them, to make gestures of them, and so to regress towards the "song" of primitive mankind. In opera we see an attempt to stylise this mode of communication into a work of art, and the problem of opera, as seen from to-day, resolves itself, in the last analysis, into a battle between the human voice and the orchestra. Arising, at the beginning of the seventeenth century (Peri's *Euridice*, generally accounted the first opera, was produced in 1600), from an aristocratic public's desire for a heightened method of declaiming verse, opera developed along the lines of the music-drama of Monteverdi, then, with the emergence of symphonic forms in instrumental music, adopted a "purer," more formal structure in the following century, and eventually, under the influence of German music after Beethoven, reverted to the music-drama of its origins. Declamation, as distinct from pure singing, had won the day and continues to hold it, though the influence of Italy, throughout the nineteenth century, was towards the predominance of the voice—a rule which critics of to-day are beginning once again to consider cardinal. Indeed, if Professor Dent's wholly admirable and extremely amusing Penguin can be said to have a thesis, it is that the German composers' increasing tendency to place the centre of interest in the orchestra, thus relegating the voice-part to a subsidiary and often quite perfunctory role, was a gross error and that the future of opera depends on composers' willingness and ability to write a continuously interesting and grateful voice-line.

It was, as Mr. Saunders makes clear, largely Weber who started the revolt against the Italian style of operatic writing. All through the period of his directorship of the Dresden opera he was busy waging war in favour of a native German opera—efforts which in the end produced *Der Freischütz*. In the light of what Wagner and Strauss were afterwards to perpetrate, Weber can hardly be accused of brutality to the voice; but Professor Dent is nevertheless right when he says, *à propos* of *Euryanthe*:

> Like all Germans he had more feeling for the orchestra than for the human voice; it is not that he gives the singers impossible passages to sing, but just at the moment when they ought to have their greatest opportunity he snatches the whole music away from them and gives his climax to the orchestra.

But to think of Weber as first and last a composer of opera is an error that dies hard. His genius was partly dramatic, but it was at least as much a lyrical one—a fact which would readily be recognised were it not for the odd neglect of his chamber music. His constructive ability was not great, so that his movements in sonata form are apt to seem weak in comparison with those of his great contemporaries and forbears; but his weakness in this respect was no greater than Schumann's, while his gift for "inevitable" melody and for sudden, spontaneous felicities of phrase was at least as great. "Without Weber," continues Professor Dent, "there could never have been a Chopin or a Liszt, and the best parts of Mendelssohn owe their inspiration to memories of Weber."

Mr. Saunders is well aware of all this, and if I prefer to quote Professor Dent it is because Mr. Saunders' book is rather stodgy and lacking in the memorable phrase. His laudable object is to reinstate a neglected master, but, though he has all the facts, he does not marshal them very acceptably. His narrative is monotonous and fails to give a clear picture of Weber himself. It is not, of course, easy to see what the man was like. The son of a shiftless father and a melancholy, feeble mother, he would seem to have inherited the chronic imprudence of the one and the ill-health and what was possibly a hidden poetry in the other. His rather dim claims to aristocratic birth placed him in a difficult position from the first, earning him the suspicion of professional musicians and the uneasy tolerance of the nobility, so that an atmosphere of quarrel and intrigue surrounded him in every post he held. That he had great personal charm seems indubitable, but it is equally clear that his reckless character prevented him from making the best use of it. The ultimate, single impression that one derives is that of pathos. Owing to a combination of adverse circumstances and a tendency to waste time, Weber made too many false starts (*Der Freischütz*, his first really successful opera, was the seventh of ten) for a man whose health should have warned him to concentrate his genius while there was yet time; and the list of his compositions in other fields shows a constant lack of the faculty to perceive what was, and what emphatically was not, worth his attempting. There was a good deal of the dilettante in Weber, and right up to the end of his short life he does not seem to have known—except at a few brief moments—what he really wanted to do. The result was a number of flashes in the pan—very brilliant ones, it is true—and for the rest, the wastage of an incomparable musical genius on material that was recalcitrant, unsuited to him, ineffective, or merely silly.

There was wastage in Verdi's life too, but of a different kind and based on different grounds. It was not mere bad judgment, as in Weber's case, but lack of education which made Verdi for so long unable to distinguish between a good libretto and a bad one. This disability alone spoilt nearly all the operas of his early and middle period, though his power of melodic invention and sense of dramatic truth were from the outset so tremendous that there is hardly one of his twenty-nine operas that does not contain at least a couple of fine things. But (to quote Professor Dent again) he seems to have been incapable of seeing a story as a whole; what he wanted was "startling situations, and above all . . . strongly drawn characters, like Lady Macbeth or Rigoletto—characters, that is, whom he could paint with his unfailing vividness and his ruthless sincerity of expression." Hence the magnificent failures—*La Forza del Destino*, *Don Carlos*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*—works in which scenes of matchless beauty and originality alternate with patches of unbelievable dullness and bathos, so that any of these operas as a whole fails to make a consistent impact on the listener, who emerges, as he does from *Oberon* or *Euryanthe*, with a sense of waste and bafflement.

But Verdi's career as a whole was, like Beethoven's, a steady crescendo; his technical ability matured parallel with his inventive and expressive genius. So overwhelming a combination of forces was bound, in the end, to produce a series of masterpieces in which there is scarcely a dull page (in the *Requiem* there is not a single one, though I agree with Mr. Hussey in finding the *Libera me* fugue otiose). Moreover, Verdi was working, from beginning to end, within a tradition—that of Italian opera, with its emphasis on the voice as the supreme organ of expression. This tradition he never attempted to upset; untroubled by *conflicting* problems (his personality was the exact opposite of Wagner's, in every respect), he was thus able to focus his vision on a single one—that of dramatic expression through a concert of voices backed by an orchestra. Subtlety is a virtue born of experience and it was inevitable that so rich a musical genius as Verdi's should, as opera succeeded opera, have elaborated a polyphonic orchestral structure out of the simple accompaniment patterns which were the basis of his style. In this respect the works of his last years show an extraordinary development from even so late an opera as *Aïda*. Yet it is always the human voice that predominates, even in *Falstaff*; to the voices alone are given the great expressive moments of *Otello*, and even in so marvellous an orchestral web as the third act of *Aïda*, the scoring is as discreet and economical as Debussy's.

Mr. Hussey's volume is a model of what a succinct critical biography should be. Well-arranged and clearly written, it combines the maximum of factual content with the maximum of criticism and comparison. Musical examples are not stinted, and there are many stimulating *obiter dicta* (notably one on the influence of sonata form on the aria) that make this book a real contribution to musical literature. Occasionally, of course, one disagrees: Mr. Hussey seems to me unfair to both Donizetti and Meyerbeer; but the disagreement is never fundamental.

Of Professor Dent's Penguin it is unnecessary to say more than that it will delight everybody, whether tiros or hardened opera-goers. It would be difficult to imagine an account more drily amusing, more accurate, or better designed to give the reader a *vue d'ensemble* of the subject. It is embellished by some excellent photographs and a number of very funny drawings by Kay Ambrose.

The latest number of *The Music Review* is rather forbidding. Apart from a very interesting essay on Schubert by T. C. L. Pritchard, it consists of an article on *Fingering the Recorder*, by Adam Carse; some defiant pages, opaque with scholarship, on the *First Editions of Brahms*, by Otto Erich Deutsch; a rather more acceptable essay on Monteverdi's *Lamento d'Arianna*, by J. A. Westrup; and finally a curiously naive affair, entitled "Music and Morality," by Eva Mary Grew. The following are examples of Miss Grew's style and point of view :—

> Zola, for example, had noble aims. But his works do not live the life of art, as do those of Balzac. They have their appeal, but it is to the mind, not to the heart and soul. . . .
>
> The intentional moral art of Wordsworth, Longfellow and the rest, exists in painting, sculpture and music. Examples from painting and sculpture need not be instanced here; it will suffice to say that the nearer the spiritual impression, made by a picture or a statue, comes to the impression made by, say, *Paradise Lost* and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, which are supreme manifestations of this quality in poetry, the nearer the picture or statue will come to a realisation of it.

'"Twas brillig, and the slithy toves . . ."

EDWARD SACKVILLE-WEST

ON THE BRINK

Polish Profile. By PRINCESS PAUL SAPIEHA. *Heinemann.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

We have been living for seven years on the edge of a precipice, but it was not till very recently that the majority of people noticed it. Probably, therefore, the sense of futility and doom that pervades this book, the feeling of hanging about in some draughty place and waiting for something dreadful to happen, is partly an afterthought. Even in Poland the established order of things must have seemed comparatively stable in 1933. And the author gives plenty of evidence that "respectable" Polish opinion looked upon Hitler as a friend almost until the final catastrophe.

Although her story is autobiographical, Princess Sapieha does not tell one much about herself nor about her motives in marrying a Polish prince who was several inches shorter than herself and whose language she did not understand. She merely records that she met him in Paris, where they were both students, and then, ten years later, having in the meantime been married and divorced, met him again and married him quite suddenly, against the opposition of both families. After that it is a tale of the struggle of a modern American woman, brought up to believe in individual liberty and the essential goodness of human beings, to adjust herself to a Catholic and feudal atmosphere. Of course a great deal of it resembles a Russian novel of Tsarist days. There is the enormous aristocracy in which everyone is related to everyone else, the interminable dinners, the match-making, the sleighrides in the snow, the wolf hunts—Marshal Goering came once to shoot on Prince Sapieha's estate, and missed his shot, but was duly supplied with a dead wolf by peasants told off for the purpose—the old servants with their feudal familiarity. Mixed up with this is the other side of Polish life, the large-scale industry that has grown up since 1918, and the miseries of unemployment under a reactionary capitalist regime. Still, all goes fairly well until 1939. Then suddenly Prince Sapieha hurries into the house to dig out his army uniform, which he has not worn since the war against the Bolsheviks. "Russia and Germany have signed a pact. It's all over." Sure enough, it is all over. Within a few weeks the Princess and her children are mixed up in the stream of refugees fleeing over the Rumanian border, the castle is being pillaged by Ruthenian peasants, the Prince is none knows where, but presumably killed in battle.

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HARRAP

Amid a spate of books about Czechoslovakia and Spain there have not been many about Poland, and this book raises once again the painful question of small nationalities. As it happens I recently saw it reviewed in a left-wing paper under the heading "Fascist Poland did not deserve to survive." The implication was that the state of independent Poland was so bad that the downright slavery instituted by Hitler was preferable. Ideas of this kind were undoubtedly gaining ground between the outbreak of war and June, 1940. In the Popular Front period left-wing opinion was committed to defending the crazy pavement of Versailles, but the Russo-German pact upset the "antifascist" orthodoxy of the past few years. It became the fashion to say that small nationalities were a nuisance and that Poland was "just as bad as" Nazi Germany. In fact, if Princess Sapieha's account is truthful, it was not nearly as bad. And the events of recent weeks have destroyed several other misconceptions. To begin with, Hitler's claim to be the friend of the poor man, fighting against the "western plutocracies," becomes incredible when one sees what kind of people in France were willing to make peace with him. Moreover, during the stagnant period of the war it had been argued that the speed with which Poland collapsed proved its inner rottenness. But actually the Polish army fought as long as the French, against far heavier odds, nor did the Poles suddenly change sides in the middle of the war. It seems, in fact, that this nation of thirty million souls, with its long tradition of struggle against the Emperor and the Tsar, deserves its independence in any world where national sovereignty is possible. Like the Czechs, the Poles will rise again, though the old feudal life, with the private chapel in the castle grounds and the gamekeeper who is the baron's foster-brother, is vanished for ever.

GEORGE ORWELL

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Rousseau and Burke. By ANNIE MARION OSBORN. *Oxford Press.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

It will be long indeed before men can afford to neglect either Rousseau or his great opponent; and any book which gives us real help in understanding them will always be welcome. Nor ought such a book to be least welcome at a time like the present, when the things held dear by both these mighty prophets are in extreme danger. Man may not have been born free, but it is too possible that ere long he may be "everywhere in chains," and the military despot, foretold by Burke, has once more arisen to threaten the world. We are all thinking of liberty and democracy, words hard to define with precision. It appears to me that Miss Osborn's book, *felix opportunitate nativitatis*, will aid us in forming a clearer conception of their true significance.

The main thesis of her book is that the two antagonists were in far closer agreement than either of them, and especially Burke, suspected. This was perceived, a century ago, by the German publicist, Gentz; but Miss Osborn has brought it out into fuller and clearer light. What prevented Burke himself from seeing it was partly his detestation of Rousseau's personal character, and still more his hatred of the "sophisters and calculators" who, professing to be disciples of Rousseau, misunderstood and misapplied the teachings of their master. "They all resemble him," cried Burke. "Him they study, him they meditate; him they turn over in all the time they can spare from the laborious mischief of the day, or the debauches of the night." He read the *Contrat Social*, and found there the theoretical lessons which the "architects of ruin" were applying in practice. "Its memorable sayings were proverbs of ashes," and its words were wind. His own conception of the State was of a system slowly formed by the wisdom of our ancestors, moulded with prudence to meet changing circumstances, adapted to our natural gifts and our material surroundings, and therefore the work of God himself. All this, he imagined, Rousseau desired to destroy in accordance with a "metaphysical" doctrine, and to set up something untried, to suit the caprice of a moment, in its place. He failed to see that Rousseau, like himself, recognised the necessity of taking actual conditions into account; that, for instance, in the constitution he drew up for Corsica he never forgot that Corsica was an island and that her population was agricultural. Nor did Burke see that Rousseau's plan for dividing Europe into a multitude of small republics was based on the realisation that men differ in their places of abode, in their history, and in their mental and moral habitudes.

As to the famous theory of the General Will, again, Miss Osborn shows, in a very careful analysis, that Burke and his adversary were not, in spite of superficial differences, far apart. The "people" of Great Britain, to Burke, were about four hundred thousand in number, the educated, the intelligent, and those who had "a stake in the country." Rousseau's "people" were more numerous, but not essentially different. And here, though I have no space to discuss many other points of interest in Miss Osborn's book, I cannot refrain from referring to a passage in which she demonstrates that the Totalitarian *sic volo, sic jubeo, sic pro ratione voluntas* is not Rousseau's General Will. It is exactly what he most feared and hated. He insisted that the General Will could be discovered only by the free interplay of social forces, and that nothing could be more fatal than the assumption of power by a single party, claiming to represent the nation as a whole, and suppressing all others. Here, too, Burke agreed with him.

Both Burke and Rousseau made mistakes, but in their main principles they were right; and, in defending our liberties, as well as those of the world, we should, had they been alive to-day, have found their voices uttering, for our encouragement, their burning words.

E. E. KELLETT

NEW NOVELS

And No Man's Wit. By ROSE MACAULAY. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Last Man. By ALFRED NOYES. *Murray.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The marriage of an eighteenth-century Cornish clergyman with a mermaid is a pretty starting-point to a fantasy, and Miss Macaulay's story of the reversion of a descendant is agreeable enough. This is a time when there are plenty of black hours in which to think how pleasant it would be to slide off into fish life, into an untroubled gliding, and the mermaid-heroine is consequently a sympathetic character. But this fantasy is yoked to bitterness and there is no escape, for the greater part of *And No Man's Wit* is a wrangle about the politics of the New Spain. Miss Macaulay has an acid wit and a lively sense of the ridiculous and writes with an air of enjoying herself; there is a good deal of pleasure to be had from her enjoyment and the *élan* with which she uses her rapier. And yet—there is a stink in the background which rises from a large number of bodies, and the effect of all this wit and good humour is to make that stink a good deal worse to bear. There is something about Spain which compensates for its aridity, its barrenness, and the grinding poverty of its life; it inspires fierce personal affection and wild prejudice. If Spain is to be one's subject, the complexity of its problems and the horror of its past demand either careful scholarship and sound treatment

or satire strong enough to stand up in the landscape. As one reads this novel the remembered sunlight of Spain bleaches and burns away the characters who are ticketed as Spanish; in one's mind Spaniards come to life — old Tories with the withered dignity of Greco portraits, young Fascists inflated with pride bubbling over with glories and bitternesses, tree-like peasants whose desire to own land had nothing to do with democracy, and burning Liberals who had something of the storm-tossed quality of French politicians of the early nineteenth century. The book skims them ineffectively and leaves their essential character behind; here they have the paunchy greasiness of *Punch* foreigners. And in the political arguments a drumfire of snap judgments crackles briskly when a bigger bang is needed to clear the air; the issues are too big for wit to cope with. The story is of a Liberal doctor who tries to find her missing son in Spain; she takes an expedition made up of a proletarian chauffeur—an ex-international brigadier comrade of her son's—her daughter, her son's wife-to-be, and in Spain she picks up an aristocrat who takes them for a tour round the prison camps of the New Spain. The son is found living as a gypsy in a raggle-taggle Starkie way, the wife-to-be reverts to mermaid and swims off, the expedition leaves Spain, and the son slips out across the mountains. The son, the aristocrat, and a member of the Action Française meet at the Bar Basque in Biarritz in the end and sum up, presenting a sort of joint petition in intellectual bankruptcy, reporting no assets and no future. Those who have no affection for Spain, or who lost no friends in that preliminary war, will probably enjoy the odd sparkling pessimism of the book and the fantasy so oddly caught in this net of argument.

Mr. Noyes's title is a fraud. A death-ray of singular characteristics destroys most of humanity but spares those in diving bells and the immediate neighbourhood of Assisi. Mark Adams is in one diving bell, in another is Evelyn Hamilton and a master-mind called Mardok, and Father Juniper and a big turn-out are at Assisi. The death-ray is one of the nicest yet conceived; it does no harm to animals and it cleans up the business of dissolution; no chromatic liquefactions, no smell, just a nice powdering process that wouldn't fuss anybody. The ray functions to clear the world of the evil forces of Democracy, Science and Materialism and there is some hard hitting against curious dummies purporting to represent these things; Mardok, the master-mind, being an epitome of contemporary evils. However, Mardok, in spite of telepathy pistols and other devilish weapons, is disposed of, and the Adam and Eve can toddle off to Assisi to help remake a soundly Catholic world under the spiritual guidance of Father Juniper. Anti-clerical Democrats will enjoy this book very much, and almost everyone will be able to have a hearty laugh over pages 170 to 175, which prove that Mussolini is ardently pro-English.

"Odd, isn't it," said Mark. "Almost everyone in England at that time thought that Mussolini was on the other side. They all coupled him with the Nazis . . ." Oh, jolly bad luck, sir.

The book recalls M. P. Shiels's *Purple Cloud*, which first came out before the last war and which was re-issued by Gollancz some time ago. That strange work was based on the assumption that the earth had, so to speak, private parts at the North Pole and it reacted by throwing off a cloud of poison gas when an impudent Polar expedition discovered them. One member of the expedition survived in a world wholly stripped of animal life, and the empty, silent world was described with a curious power. That literary oddity can be recommended to anyone who should happen to come across it.

ANTHONY WEST

POT LORE

A Potter's Book. By BERNARD LEACH. *Faber.* 21s.

Bernard Leach's pottery and the work of his pupils at St. Ives, of his Japanese associates, and of those who share his ideals, has so many admirers that this sensible and lucid account of his methods will certainly find a large and probably an international public. After a chapter on the history and principles of the craft, which is scholarly and sound, the book is entirely practical. As in the discussion of every craft, there is much local lore, and many picturesque and appetising details are involved, of wood ashes and Irish Moss, of knacks in kneading and the right sort of weather to choose for baking. "Many of the problems will appear more familiar if translated into terms of good home cooking . . . to-day the average man or woman judges pots by a Victorian trade standard, and food apparently by none at all."

But no ready-made recipes for artistic effects are offered, and there is a commendable absence of those misleading samples of decorative design which do so much harm to students. There are admirable illustrations of actual pots of types very little known, even to collectors, and chosen from all periods and countries, including four excellent colour-plates and seventy-seven half-tone; and there are numerous useful drawings of tools and details of kiln-construction, and admirable tables of glaze-composition and kiln-temperatures. The book is practical rather than technical, however, and is generous in useful tips. The glossary and index are admirable.

Mr. Leach is not one of those who think that pottery and porcelain are as it were artificial precious substances, depending on a finished perfection which they owe to some technical secret of composition or chemistry. This view of the arts, both minor and major, was almost universal in the past, and still survives; it is a relic of the pre-scientific age, the age of apprentices and alchemists. Mr. Leach, as he says, is only too well aware that the difficulty is not to avoid giving away the secrets of good craftsmanship but to find anyone who is enough of an artist to be able to make anything of them.

All sensible people are inclined to ask why modern stone-ware always seems to follow early Chinese models; isn't it merely imitative? The answer is, some of it is; and the reason why all of it seems to have a Chinese flavour is that whether you make a pancake in Pekin or in Cornwall, if you make it right and use the right ingredients, it will come out much the same. Mr. Leach went to Japan, dreaming of Lafcadio Hearn, in the early years of this century, before the craze for Sung ceramics had begun. He went not as a student of pottery, but as a teacher of etching. He would never have made a fashionable success as an etcher—he had more in common with Blake than with Bond Street, and in Japan he found more to learn than to teach. He fell in with an individual traditional potter (in England at that time the individual potters were not traditional, they were amateurs practising "applied art"), and the few traditional potters he found in England when he came back after a twelve years' absence were local survivors of limited experience.

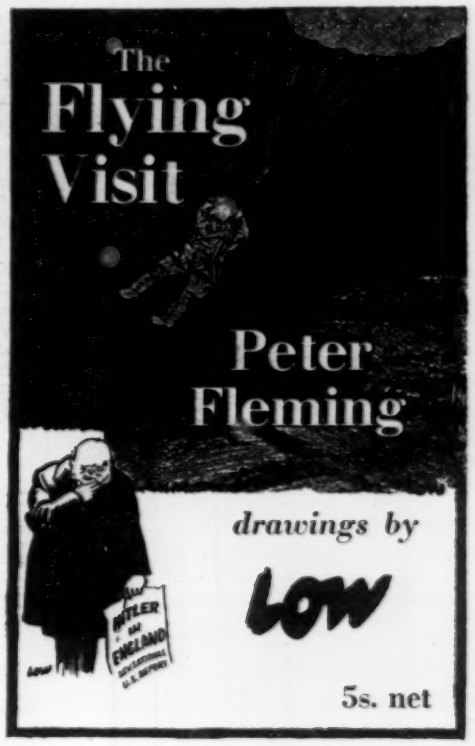
The Introduction by Mr. Soyetsu Yanagi, Director of the National Folk Art Museum, Tokyo, should not be missed. Half the fascination of Mr. Leach's personality consists in his craftsman's ability to transcend national barriers. Whatever the force is that has enabled him to do all that he has done, it is a civilising force.

W. W. WINKWORTH

Bibliography of Chios. By PHILIP ARGENTI. *Oxford University Press.* 42s.

For an island only thirty miles long by eight to fifteen miles broad, Chios has a history and culture of amazing variety and interest; and Mr. Philip

JULY 19



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36 Essex Street, London, W.C.2

Argenti's book collects together all the information that can be had on this "Athens of modern Greece." The healthy climate and fertile land have given the inhabitants leisure for rare imagination and art, and Mr. Argenti points out all that has been written from Homer to A.D. 1936 on their folklore, sculpture, architecture, coinage, agriculture, taxation, trade, cookery and costume, in a way that should prove indispensable to research workers and amateurs alike in these different fields of human activity. In early days Chios was reputed to be one of the best governed states in Greece, with its system of party government; and later under Turkish and then Italian rule, it saw a bitter, though theologically fascinating, struggle between the followers of the Greek Church and the Roman Catholic. It is indeed refreshing that a purely scholarly work of this kind should appear during the present colossal struggle between culture and obscurantism.

Frank Brangwyn. By PHILIP MACER-WRIGHT. *Hutchinson.* 10s. 6d.

Mr. Brangwyn's work excites enthusiasm chiefly among those who are not deeply interested in painting. It is not surprising, therefore, that the author of this sincere and generous book should seem little concerned with art in general, and should make no attempt to "situate" his subject. Mr. Brangwyn himself is almost a self-taught painter, and we gather that apart from a youthful devotion to Donatello and Mantegna, he has been little affected by either the Old Masters or his great contemporaries. This indeed one would suppose: his work is undisciplined, and will be considered, according to taste, either vigorous or empty. Rhetoric in painting has always failed to endure, unless accompanied by more solid virtues, and it is significant that Mr. Brangwyn's influence, except upon poster-artists, has been negligible. The English equivalent of Sert (with whom he shares a taste for elephants), he probably could have been a striking stage-decorator. Mr. Macer-Wright naturally devotes much space to the decorations commissioned by Lord Iveagh for the House of Lords, and rejected by their Lordships on the advice of the Fine Arts Commission. One may consider the decision wise, but the artist is certainly justified in complaining of the inconsiderate treatment he received. The value of Mr. Macer-Wright's book has nothing to do with art, but depends upon his portrait of a man—a lively, eccentric, uneducated, courageous, unworldly, permanently adolescent individualist. Mr. Brangwyn and his biographer are alike to be congratulated upon the friendship that has inspired this affectionate tribute.

"The Art of Record Buying" 1940

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Week-end Competitions

No. 544

Set by Thomas Smallbones

The revised edition of Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon (in the preface to which Sir Henry Stuart Jones, the reviser, hoped that the work might "further in some degree the restoration of the comity of nations") has just been issued by the Clarendon Press. A first prize of two guineas and a second of half a guinea are offered for a complimentary epigram on this event at this time.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, July 19th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 542

Set by G. W. Stonier

The simplest way of testing a bad novel is to read its last paragraph; there, as a rule, the peculiar badness of the author reaches heights of unconscious parody. Nor are bad novelists the only defaulters in this respect. We offer the usual prizes for the best—or worst, should it be?—last paragraphs. These should be taken from actual novels, the authors and titles of which must be given; and the more august the source the better.

Report by G. W. Stonier

This competition produced many entries but rather fewer surprises than I had hoped. "Dickens, of course!" seems to have been the first jump, and a dozen times *Nicholas Nickleby* or *Martin Chuzzlewit* was brought down from the shelf. The latter, certainly, has an ending which only Dickens could have written and failed to reject:

> And coming from a garden, Tom, bestrewn with flowers by children's hands, thy sister, little Ruth, as light of foot and heart as in the old days, sits down beside thee. From the Present, and the Past, with which she is so tenderly entwined in all thy thoughts, thy strain soars onward to the Future. As it resounds within thee and without, the noble music, rolling round ye both, shuts out the grosser prospects of an earthly parting, and uplifts ye both to Heaven!

Pretty enough. But Dickens is full of such appeals, and of blank verse as trite; he takes it too much in his stride for this passage to be more than the usual sugar-plum for readers with a sweet tooth. Scott (another favourite) proves even less rewarding: a clutter of rusty phrases and flat sentiment. "... insomuch, that when her friends sorrowed for her death, which arrived at a late period of her existence, they were comforted by the fond reflection, that the humanity which she then laid down, was the only circumstance which had placed her, etc." This comes from the last sentence of *The Pirate*, a novel, thank God, I'd never heard of until I opened Mr. Laing's envelope. Badness, unrelieved incompetence, isn't enough, or Mr. Laing with *The Pirate* would carry off a prize. No *élan!* as Samuel Butler's sister used to exclaim about the cook. The sort of endings I was looking for are those into which the author has squeezed a last ounce of sentiment (whereas Scott and Dickens have diluted theirs). One must be tempted to re-read slowly, to read aloud. This seems nearer the real thing:

> They had stood up by now; so he could put his real arm right round her magnificent shoulders and stem the flow of nonsense at its source. She returned with a sort of humble fervour the mighty hug of the Adam-like lover whose whole and unwasted estate of passion was still his to bring to a bride. So the two unconscious emblems of all that had saved England in war and had now to save her in peace stood enlaced, each of them freed at last from every care but the fear of not being worthy of the other.—*Rough Justice*, by C. E. Montague. (J. C. Maxwell.)

Yes, "the mighty hug of the Adam-like lover whose whole and unwasted estate of passion was still his to bring to a bride" is worth hoarding. Here the author's talent definitely helps: Miss Dell, for example (it's in her line), would probably have put down wilder words without being so absurd. Letting yourself go and refining at the same time is one recipe for bad enders.

Here are a few others: they raise no doubts, but just fail to reach prize levels.

> "Blood of my heart!" whispered Capes, holding her close to him. "I know, I understand."—*Ann Veronica*, by H. G. Wells. (Q.R.)

> "Oh, Mr. Thurnall! my dear, brave, wise, wonderful Mr. Thurnall! come home again!—home to God!—and home to me! I am not worthy! Too much happiness, too much, too much!—but you will forgive, will you not—and forget—forget?" And so the old heart passed away from Mr. Thurnall: and instead of it grew up a heart like his father's; even the heart of a little child.—*Two Years Ago*, by Charles Kingsley. (Mrs. Ormerod.)

Maybe it was not Gillian, in all the tremulous yet triumphant beauty of wifehood and motherhood, not even Robert in the glory of manhood and poetry and courageous love, that came nearest to this mystery, which decrees that those who are all love as Ailse was, must suffer while those who are selfish, like Gillian, are redeemed. Perhaps it was Ailse's compensation, as she floated downstream to eternity in the water-lily of a pure and unrewarded love, that she understood before them all the secret that's never been told.—*Seven for a Secret*, by Mary Webb. (D. W. Robertson and J. E. McKeand.)

A few of the great, also, came in for scrutiny. I was asked to reconsider the endings of *Persuasion*, *The Way of all Flesh*, *Rasselas*; but with the best malice in the world I cannot pretend they wobbled, even away from their contexts. About the prize-winner there can be no doubts. Mr. James H. Wilson has found in *Beau Ideal* the perfect tosh ending: henceforth I shall never miss reading the last page of a new novel by P. C. Wren. And "Redling" has found in the last paragraph of *The Plumed Serpent* the best parody of D. H. Lawrence I have seen.

FIRST PRIZE

That is the moment in which I should have died. Instead I took a horse and rode away. I rode further and harder than I had ever done in all my life, but I was not cruel to my horse. Who, that has been kissed by Isobel, should be cruel, or ever mean, or base or bad?

Am I happy?

Dear God! Who that has been kissed by Isobel is not happy?—*Beau Ideal*, by P. C. Wren.

(James H. Wilson.)

SECOND PRIZE

"Yo! Yo!"—his eyebrows lifted with queer mock surprise, and a little convulsion went through his body again. "Te quiero mucho! Mucho te quiero! Mucho! Mucho! I like you very much! Very much!"

It sounded so soft, so soft-tongued, of the soft, wet, hot blood, that she shivered a little.

"You won't let me go!" she said to him.—*The Plumed Serpent*, by D. H. Lawrence.

("Redling.")

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ANGLO-SOVIET Concert at Unity Theatre, Goldington Street, N.W.1, Monday, July 15th, at 8 p.m. UNITY STRING ORCHESTRA and LONDON LABOUR CHORAL UNION. Works by Purcell, Rawsthorne, Shostakovitch, etc. Seats at 1s. 6d., 1s. and 6d. Members and Associates.

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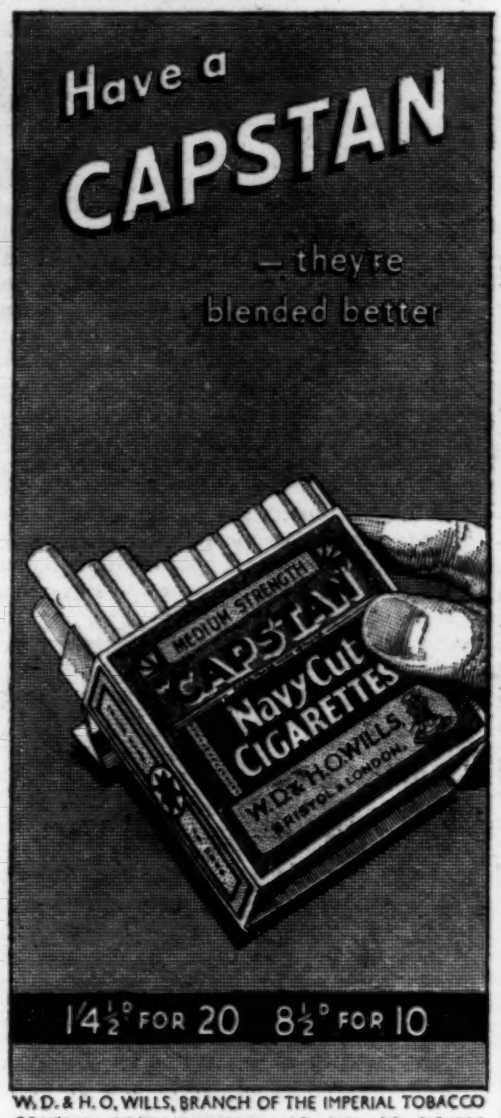

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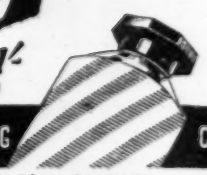

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

BLACK-OUT IN THE CITY—OIL SHARES AND SHELL—TIN

THE recovery in ordinary shares on the Stock Exchange seems to have spent itself for the time being. Nearly half the loss suffered over the past month has been made good in many cases, and until clear instructions are given to the insurance companies by the Treasury that they should use their idle cash in supporting the market—if necessary through the agency of a buying consortium—the recovery is not likely to go further. Indeed, on bad news the market will go back. For example, the warning from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that further taxation must soon be imposed to meet our increasing expenditures, now over £9 millions a day, was enough to put equity share prices down again. A reduction of thousands of millions in security values which we have recently suffered involves the Inland Revenue in such fantastic and unnecessary losses that an alert Chancellor of the Exchequer would have taken drastic action long ago—either by establishing minimum prices for equity shares or by taking over the functions which Stock Exchange jobbers have now virtually ceased to perform. But all that Sir Kingsley did was to appoint a Morgan Grenfell director to advise him! We shall get no change out of the City if the old financial order is allowed to advise the old gentlemen of the Treasury on how the old "avenues are to be explored."

* * *

The conservatism of the Shell Transport and Trading directors is proverbial, but in passing their final dividend for 1939 they over-reached themselves. The Chairman stated that apart from the destruction of their properties which had taken place in Europe, the group's results for 1939 would have made a not unfavourable showing. If this means that they could have declared a final dividend of 15 per cent. tax free, making 20 per cent. tax free as in the previous year, the Shell must have provided nearly £7,000,000 as a reserve against war damage. As the Shell percentage of the Royal Dutch-Shell pool is 40 per cent., this implies that the group may have provided nearly £17,000,000 against loss of marketing properties, although its raw material supplies (the source of its wealth) remain intact. This seems an excess of prudence. Oil shares have come back on this display of Shell pessimism and Shell Transport shares are no more than 1 11/16. Anglo-Iranian have fallen also to 1 11/16 on the unfounded fear of a Russian invasion of Iran. I would hold both shares for recovery, even if one has to wait a year or two for the "comeback." I am attracted by Trinidad Leaseholds at 2¾. Trinidad is defended by the might of America as well as by British naval power, and Trinidad Leaseholds is fortunate in having suffered no damage to its properties or to its customers, who are the British Admiralty and the British public. For the year ended June, 1940, it has declared an interim of 7½ per cent., and I would expect the final to be increased to say 10 per cent. or 12½ per cent., making 17½ per cent. or 20 per cent. for the year. The shares would then return a yield of 6.4 per cent. or 7.2 per cent. Trinidad Leaseholds are not exactly cheap, but one has to pay a premium for safety.

It is difficult to see how tin-producing companies can fail now to return to the dividends of their bumper year 1937. In that year the average quota was 107 per cent. and the average price of tin £242 per ton. For the next twelve months the quota is to be 130 per cent.—thanks to the purchase in this period by the Washington Government of 75,000 tons of tin in addition to the normal commercial consumption of the U.S.A. estimated at 85,000 tons a year. This quota of 130 per cent. means that tin-producing companies will be working to the limit of their capacity. The maximum possible world output, allowing for an increase over their previous record on the part of Malaya, Dutch E. Indies, Siam and Nigeria, for the twelve months to the 30th June, 1941, is estimated at about 235,000 tons and total world demand (including the special purchase of 75,000 tons) at about 245,000 tons. Thus there is no possibility of a surplus of tin being produced. On the contrary it is pretty certain that "free" stocks in commercial hands will decline. It is even suggested that there may be competitive buying between the American and British Governments. I hope that the International Tin Committee, whose Chairman is Sir John Campbell, an official of the Colonial Office, will see to it that there is no such thing. The Metal Reserve Company, which is the purchasing agency for the Washington Government, has offered to buy any tin offered to it at 50 cents per pound which is equivalent to £268 per ton c.i.f. London (present price being £265 per ton), but whether the British Government is also acquiring a war reserve of tin, and, if so, at what price, no one knows, for tin does not come within the purview of the non-ferrous metal controller of the Ministry of Supply. I will assume that common sense will prevail, that the price of tin will not soar, but that it will not fall below £260 per ton. The yields on tin shares at 97 dividends would be large :—

	1937 Div.	1936/37 High	Present Middle Price	Yield %
British Tin, 10/- ...	15%	24/6	13/3	11.3
Southern Kinta, 5/-	30%	25/7½	10/6	14.3
Malayan Tin, 5/- ...	92½%	50/7½	28/-	16.5
Tronoh, 5/- ...	60%	37/10½	20/-	15.0
Amal. Tin Mines of Nigeria, 5/-...	17½%	14/-	5/-	17.5

It must not be forgotten that after July, 1941 the quota will be reduced and these yields may no longer obtain. Even so, tin shares are cheap.

Company Meeting

"SHELL" TRANSPORT AND TRADING

THE Annual General Meeting of the "Shell" Transport and Trading Company, Limited, was held on Monday in London.

Sir Robert Waley Cohen, K.B.E., presided in the absence of the Rt. Hon. Viscount Bearsted, M.C. (the chairman) and read the speech of the latter, which stated that the financial strength of the company had been maintained and its liabilities remained as small as ever. It had been considered advisable, having regard to the widespread destruction of property in European countries, in all of which their operating companies had large interests, that the liquid resources of the Group should be conserved. The operating companies had not found it possible to declare or to distribute any further dividends for the year 1939 beyond those which had enabled this company to pay the interim dividend in January last.

It was impossible to give any indication of the present trend of the earnings of the companies in which they were interested. Statistical information was not coming in with the same regularity and promptness as under normal conditions, and shareholders would not expect him to appraise the position under the conditions ruling to-day. Many markets were closed; they had to keep constantly before them the possible closing of others and so to arrange their affairs as to endeavour to reduce to a minimum the losses that might be involved.

There had apparently been a conception in the public mind that oil companies in time of war would make large profits. That was very far from the truth. He had many times pointed out that oil companies' profits, compared with the capital involved, were comparatively small; in wartime with restrictions of every kind, a reasonable return on capital became still more difficult. They all agreed that in the public interest that was both proper and inevitable.

Before the outbreak of war they had taken steps to assure the continued maintenance of the Group's technical organisation. The report was adopted.

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LECTURES AND MEETINGS

THE ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, Bayswater, W.2. Morning service only. July 14th, at 11 a.m. H. J. BLACKHAM: "THE OTHER WORLD."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Sunday, July 14th, at 11 a.m. C. E. M. JOAD, M.A., D.Lit.: "THOMAS HARDY—CENTENARY."

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INFORMATION given without fee on BOARDING SCHOOLS.—CICELY C. WRIGHT, 4 York Road, Headington, Oxford.

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